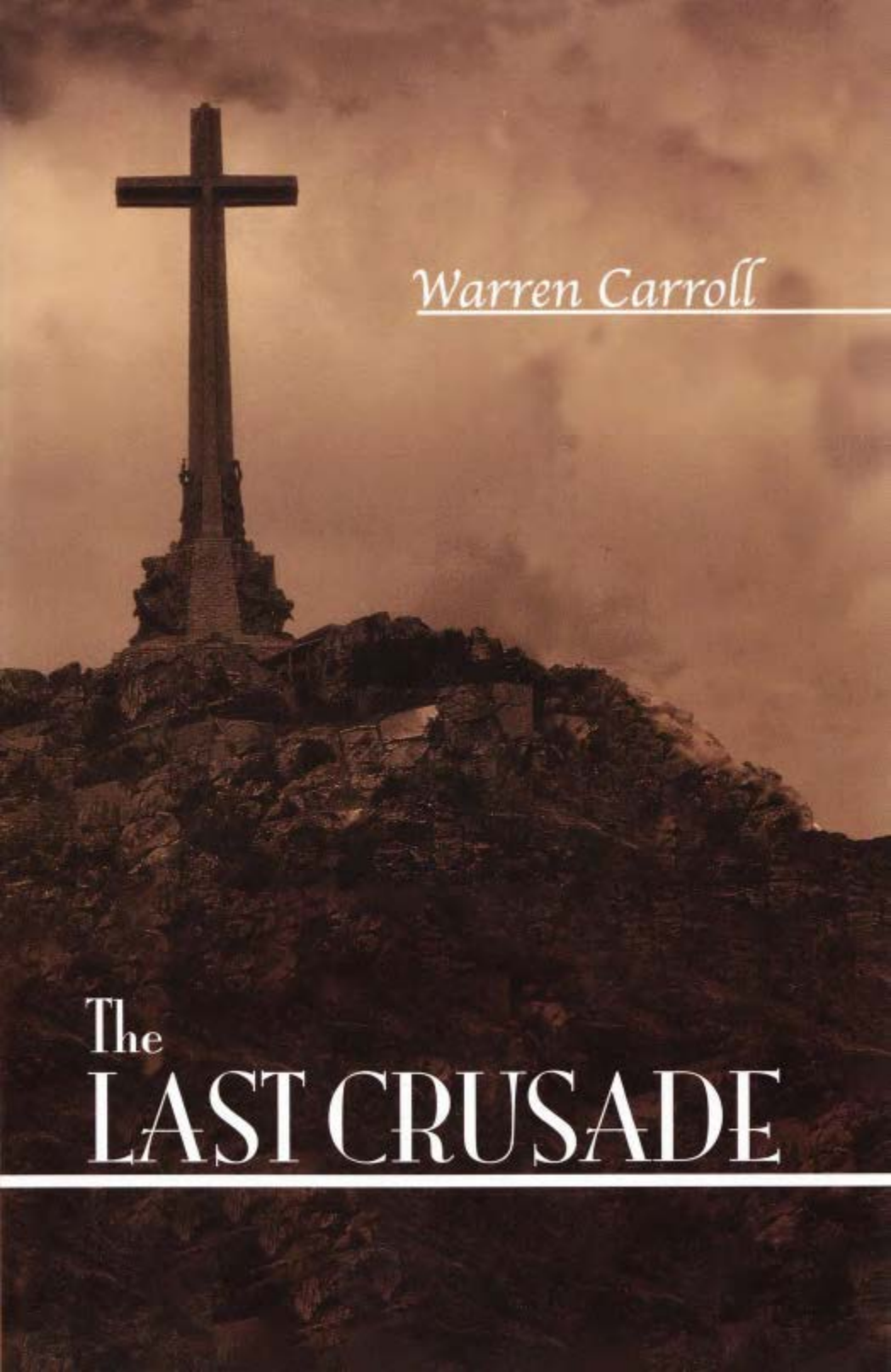
Warren Carroll
The
LAST CRUSADE

THE LAST CRUSADE

Spain: 1936

by WARREN H. CARROLL

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DEDICATED
to my beloved crusaders
TIM AND CATHY O'DONNELL
president and first lady of Christendom College
Knight and Lady of the Holy Sepulchre
well met at El Escorial in Spain, 1973

Viva Cristo Rey!

Acknowledgments

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The map of Spain on page viii is from *Spain:A Companion to Spanish Studies* edited by P. E. Russell. It is used by permission from Methuen & Co., London.

Cover photo by Timothy O'Donnell: Cross at the Valley of the Fallen in Spain.

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Spain and Portugal

Introduction

On the southern slope of the rugged Guadarrama Mountains just north of Madrid, close by the monastery-palace at El Escorial built by Spain's great King Philip II as the material sheet-anchor of the Faith, the Church, and Christendom which his life and reign were pledged to defend, a mighty cross pierces the sky. Around its base cluster the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, each commemorated by a colossal figure, visible from miles away. Lower down, a crypt church stands at the portal of a vast mausoleum, with a line of solemn stone angels, bowed over swords, standing on each side of the entrance way. Upon the altar within, Mass continues to be said for the tens of thousands whose mortal remains rest under the hill.

It is called the Valley of the Fallen. Sixty years have passed since the mighty confrontation between Faith and Revolution—the Spanish Civil War—which took the lives of those who lie there. Few come now to honor them, for people of our time are uneasy with heroes, hostile to crusaders, scornful of martyrs, and prefer to forget both faith and revolution. Yet the giant cross still soars above the Valley of the Fallen, too lofty and vast to be either hidden or wholly ignored. For a thousand years and more it will memorialize, even to a heedless world, the men of the last crusade. Only such a cross could rightfully mark their sacrifice.

Standing before that cross, gazing up at the infinite blue behind and above it, one can seem to hear, faintly and afar, the bugle of the fifteen-year old trumpeter of the Alcázar of Toledo sounding the call to arms to his fellow crusaders after two and a half tons of TNT had just exploded under them on September 18, 1936. One can seem to see, beyond the sky, the white-robed army of Spain's martyrs of 1936—at least ten thousand strong—whose refusal to deny Christ their Lord on pain of death bought them instant entry into Heaven with their blood, many of whom

died praying for their killers. The Church remembers them, for the Church always remembers martyrs; Pope John Paul II has beatified nearly two hundred of them already, most recently 45 on October 1, 1995.

In keeping with the unlimited love and devotion of the martyrs, even those who had fought against the Catholic cause in Spain in this dreadful civil war, whose families wished it, were buried in the Valley of the Fallen alongside those who died fighting for that cause, so that the enemies whom the Incarnate God commanded us to love might benefit from the Masses in the crypt as well as from the prayers of the martyrs. There is no more Catholic place on earth than the Valley of the Fallen in the Guadarrama Mountains of Spain.

Lest Catholics in particular forget, on the sixtieth anniversary of their sacrifice it is time to retell their story, especially for our young people who have been denied heroism and crusade, and may yet be called upon for martyrdom. The story must be told honestly, with full respect for historical truth; but let no man demand that it be neutral. There are no neutral histories of the Spanish Civil War. Everyone who writes of that shattering conflict must choose his side, and everyone who writes of it does choose his side (whether he admits it or not). In the words of the French Catholic poet Paul Claudel:

> *On nous met le ciel et l'enfer dans la main et nous avons quarante secondes pour choisir.*
>
> *Quarante secondes, c'est trop! Soeur Espagne, sainte Espagne, tu as choisi!*
>
> *Onze évêques, seize mille prêtres et pas une apostasie!*
>
> *Ah! Puisse-je comme toi un joir à voix haute témoigner dans la splendeur du midi!*

Heaven and Hell are put into your hand and you have forty seconds to choose!

Forty seconds—too long! Sister Spain, holy Spain, you have chosen!

Eleven bishops, sixteen thousand priests massacred and not one apostasy!

Ah! Might I like you one day raise my voice to testify in the splendor of noontide![1]

[1]Paul Claudel, "Aux Martyrs Espagnols.'" The actual total of martyred priests and religious was 6,832—more than enough to justify what Claudel wrote.

Winter
(January-March)

For more than a thousand years Spain had been the sword of Christendom. Her sons had fought and won the longest war in the history of the world, the 770-year struggle against the Moors who invaded and conquered Spain from Arabia and North Africa, bringing their Muslim faith—conquered it all but a tiny mountain eyrie in the far north where embattled King Pelayo proclaimed in 722: "Our hope is in Christ! This little mountain will be the salvation of Spain."[1] Over that immense span of time he and his descendants and their people made that promise good: acre by acre, mile by mile, they redeemed their land from its conquerors by their blood. During the one hundred and fifty years after the completion of the Reconquest, Spain opened up America and became the leading power in the world. A long decline was followed by an astonishing rise from the ashes in defiance of would-be world conqueror Napoleon Bonaparte, heir to the French Revolution.

But during the remainder of the nineteenth century Spain lost her way again, and this time her decline was not only political and economic, but moral and spiritual. The legitimacy of her monarchy was challenged by the strongly Catholic movement known as Carlism in a series of civil wars; her parliament was discredited by rampant corruption; her remaining overseas territories were badly misgoverned. In 1898 Spain was grotesquely humiliated in a war with the United States in which the Philippine Islands, which she had ruled for more than three hundred

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[1] *Cronica de Alfonso III*, ed. Antonio Ubierto Artieta (Valencia, 1971), p. 33 (Rotense manuscript).

years, were taken from her without a single casualty to the attacking force, and the Spanish warships sent to hold Cuba were scuttled in the open sea rather than fight a hopeless contest. The wave of national shame which followed was skillfully turned to their own advantage by those who wanted to make Spain less Catholic and more revolutionary. Large segments of Spanish society were alienated from the national heritage. Among intellectuals taught to despise Spain's Catholic glories, among workers newly come to the cities and torn from their traditional roots, among even rural people in the hot dry south where excessively large estates created a gulf between the owners of the land and the laborers on it, and among the restless angry Catalans of the north who more and more emphasized their ethnic distinction from the rest of Spain, the popularity of revolutionary movements grew. National unions of Socialists and even anarchists burgeoned to memberships of hundreds of thousands; no country in all history has had nearly so many organized anarchists as Spain had by 1931.[2] In proportion to the total population of the country, the Communist Party in Spain at the beginning of 1936 was larger than the Bolshevik Party in Russia at the beginning of 1917, the year in which it took power.[3]

Yet another military disaster, in Morocco in 1921, led to a strong patriotic reaction among most of the high-ranking army officers and the installation of one of them, Miguel Primo de Rivera,[4] as dictator. He was not an oppressive ruler, executing

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[2]The anarchist union CNT claimed a membership of 600,000 in 1931, and this does not seem to have been a greatly inflated figure (Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. [New York, 1986], p. 70n.

[3]Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* (New York, 1970), p. 107.

[4]Spanish names pose a problem to those unfamiliar with Spanish customs or language. Many, though not all Spaniards have compound surnames in addition to their first names and one or more middle names. It is often unclear to a foreigner which surnames are compound. Consequently in this book middle names will not normally be used. If an individual is introduced with more than two names, all names after the first are part of the surname. Exceptions (such as

no one during his seven years of power, and stepped down willingly when he concluded that he had lost much of his initial support. But his sudden, unexpected departure left a vacuum which weak-willed, inexperienced King Alfonso XIII was unable to fill. In municipal elections in April 1931 the cities rejected most monarchist candidates, though in the countryside most of them prevailed. In a manner reminiscent of his unhappy predecessor Charles IV, who accepted a villa in France from Napoleon in return for his abdication on demand, Alfonso XIII declared:

> Sunday's elections have shown me that I no longer enjoy the love of my people. I could very easily find means to support my royal powers against all comers, but I am determined to have nothing to do with setting one of my countrymen against another in a fratricidal civil war. Thus, until the nation speaks, I shall deliberately suspend the use of my royal prerogatives.[5]

The futile king at once boarded a plane for England, and never set foot in Spain again. Five years later the "fratricidal civil war" came in full measure.

A Second Spanish Republic was promptly proclaimed (the first had failed ignominiously in the late 1860s). Its first prime minister was Niceto Alcalá Zamora, but he and Interior Minister Miguel Maura were the only practicing Catholics in his cabinet. The other cabinet members ranged from total indifference to outright hostility to the Faith that was so profoundly intertwined with Spain's origins, history, character and national identity. All of them believed—as Manuel Azaña, their most prominent leader, openly stated in a major speech in October 1931—that Spain had "ceased to be Catholic."[6] The trend did appear to be

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Miguel Primo de Rivera's son José Antonio, universally called only by these names to distinguish him from his father) will be identified in notes.

[5]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 32.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 49.

running in that direction. Not only were the majority of Spanish Catholics non-practicing, but in some parishes Mass attendance had virtually ceased; the priest would say most Sunday Masses alone. Socialists and anarchists never tired of painting the clergy as hirelings of the rich "upper classes," though in fact most priests received little more money than their parishioners and most religious lived in near-poverty. But in these turbulent and disillusioned times, many Spanish people believed the socialist and anarchist charges. In May 1931 about a hundred churches and other religious buildings were destroyed or damaged throughout Spain. The Jesuit church on the Calle de la Flor in the center of Madrid was burned to the ground. Though eventually the Catholic Interior Minister Maura persuaded the government to call out the army to stop the attacks on the churches, Azaña opposed this action, saying that "all the *conventos* in Spain are not worth the life of a single republican."[7]

By the fall of 1931 the new regime had presented its constitution, which included prohibition of any financial support of the Church by public funds; authorization for the government to expel religious orders (so phrased as to require the expulsion of the Jesuits); a requirement for government approval of every "public manifestation of religion," including even the ancient traditional processions on great fiesta days; and an end to all religious education in any school. When even some liberal newspapers criticized these measures, Azaña responded: "Do not tell me that this is contrary to freedom. It is a matter of public health."[8] There was fierce debate on these constitutional provisions in Spain's parliament, the Cortes. Prime Minister Alcalá Zamora and Interior Minister Maura resigned. At the end of the

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[7]José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), pp. 7n-8n. The Spanish word *conventos* is used for both monasteries for men and convents for women.

[8]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 76.

year the constitution was approved, and Azaña became the new prime minister. Rather curiously, Alcalá Zamora was elected the first president of the Second Republic despite his alienation from the government. All European presidents at that time had very limited power, much less than the prime minister. However, the new Spanish constitution did give the president power to dissolve the Cortes and call for new elections once, but no more than once, during his five-year term of office.

Thus did Manuel Azaña emerge as the leader of his deeply troubled country for the next two years, and again after the epochal election of February 1936. He was very much an intellectual. Raised a Catholic and sent to the highly regarded Maria Cristina University at El Escorial, directly across the street from the monastery-palace of Philip II from which he had directed the lay program of the Catholic Reformation in the second half of the sixteenth century, Azaña had lost his faith there. He was a skillful wordsmith but a political dilettante, as far removed as it is possible to be from a man of action. A lonely man because of his extreme physical unattractiveness, he had genuine compassion, but little resolution. As the liberal president of Spain, he was to watch a tide of demonic slaughter sweep over his country, obviously horrified by it, yet unable or unwilling do anything to stop it.

Azaña's government fell in 1933 as Catholic opinion in Spain hardened against it, after the ranking general of the army, José Sanjurjo, unsuccessfully attempted a military coup late in 1932 to overthrow it. The government had not yet actually closed the Catholic schools as the constitution called for, but was scheduled to do so at the end of 1933. Spaniards who were still Catholic—still a very large number—realized they must act, and the elections that followed Azaña's resignation gave them their opportunity. They were a major defeat for the Left. Parties and independents of the Right gained 201 seats in the Cortes (up from 41 in 1931), those of the Center had 177 (up from 152), and

those of the Left got only 97 (down from 247).[9] The largest single party representation (117) belonged to CEDA, a new and explicitly Catholic party founded that very year, headed by José Gil Robles, full of youthful vigor at 34, an excellent speaker and a loyal Catholic who had consistently and strongly opposed the anti-Catholic clauses of the constitution from the beginning. His party included both monarchists and republicans and as such was well suited to gain broad public support. But, with a hesitancy and timidity that were to characterize his political actions (though not his oratory) over the next three critical years, Gil Robles declared before the election that his party did not seek immediately to set up a government. Therefore this task was left to the unprincipled political manipulator Alejandro Lerroux, head of the misnamed Radical Party of the Center, who had indeed been a revolutionary in his youth but now, at twice Gil Robles' age, was willing to get power wherever and however he could find it. Two years later Lerroux and much of his government were discredited in a gambling scandal, and the Left had a golden opportunity to recoup.

This election and the new Cortes it chose marked the emergence of a famous but enigmatic figure of the Spanish Civil War, who is buried beside Franco at the Valley of the Fallen: José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the retired dictator, known only by his first two names to distinguish him from his father. He founded the Falange, the Spanish organization which most nearly resembled the totalitarian parties of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy; we shall see the Falange engaging in assassinations and pre-emptive assaults of the same kind as were conducted by the radical Socialists, Communists, and anarchists, though for the purpose of aiding the Right. The Falange was by no means always friendly to the Catholic Church. Yet José Antonio himself was, by the admission even of his enemies, a remarkably gentle

[9]Richard A. H. Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain; the Right, the Republic, and the Revolution 1931-1936* (London, 1970), p. 149.

and charming man given to poetic if rather woolly philosophizing, who always remained a practicing Catholic. He felt driven to defend his father, and like his father had little use for representative government (a viewpoint widely held in Spain since the French Revolution). In the end José Antonio proved far more significant as a victim than as an actor in history, more memorable dead than alive.

In what remained of the Left in the new Cortes, the Socialists had the majority, 58 seats; the Communists, though they had polled 200,000 votes, had only one seat.[10] (The system of proportional representation used in the Second Spanish Republic had many quirks.) The anarchists, true to their principles, had refused to run candidates. But the Communists were much more significant than their representation indicated, and the Socialists were deeply split between their two leaders, both of whom had sat in Azaña's cabinet: Indalecio Prieto and Francisco Largo Caballero. The two men had hated each other for more than fifteen years. Prieto had a brilliant mind and was very conscious of it; Largo Caballero did not. Prieto was an excellent writer and speaker; Largo Caballero was neither. Prieto was a genuine democratic Socialist; Largo Caballero was a revolutionary, who enjoyed being called the Spanish Lenin and, though not formally a Communist, followed the Communist leader's doctrine without deviation after reading his works while in prison in 1935. Largo Caballero excelled as an organizer, and had built up the Socialist labor union UGT, of which he was secretary-general, until by 1932 it had over a million members.[11] Prieto at fifty looked like the cartoon caricature of a capitalist: hugely corpulent, egg-bald with little piglike eyes. By contrast Largo Caballero looked avuncular, but younger than his 64 years; he had tremendous energy, always a vital asset in a revolution. He was very popular with the workers, and despite his intellectual limitations was to

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[10]*Ibid.*; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 122.
[11]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, p. 328.

prove the most dangerous and capable of all the Spanish revolutionary leaders.

The Communist Party of Spain, headed by José Diaz, formerly an anarchistic baker of Sevilla, was still small in numbers despite its strong vote in the 1933 elections. It worked closely with Lenin's Comintern (the "Third International") and had deeply penetrated the Socialists, loosely organized and split as they were. The secretary for the Socialist Party in the Cortes elected in 1933 was Carlos Lamoneda, who had been a member of the Communist Party since 1921, though he pretended to change parties during the election campaign; while Alvarez del Vayo, a secret Communist, "dominated relations between the parliamentary representation and the [Socialist] party at large."[12] By late 1935 del Vayo had become the primary ideological guide of Largo Caballero.[13] Santiago Carrillo, a future leader of the Spanish Communist Party, was secretary of the Socialist Youth organization. Working through their natural ally, Largo Caballero, the Communists were to gain rapidly growing influence in Spain during 1936.

All the political elements in Spain which we have discussed, along with the remaining marginalized supporters of the vanished Alfonso XIII, had their counterparts in other countries in Europe during this dark decade of depression and spreading totalitarianism. But there was one large, well-organized and totally committed movement that was unique to Spain: the Traditionalist Communion, the resurrection of Carlism in the twentieth century.

The Carlists were the champions of the Spanish Catholic tradition. Their movement came into being in the aftermath of the great war against Napoleon and the atheistic spirit of the French Revolution, which had become a crusade for Spain. The unworthy Ferdinand VII was king, but he was middle-aged, in poor health, and childless. His brother Carlos was therefore his

[12]Payne, *Spanish Revolution*, p. 167.
[13]Salvador de Madariaga, *Spain* (New York, 1943), pp. 344-345.

heir. Carlos was a dedicated Catholic whose goal was to restore the greatness of the Spain of Queen Isabel and Philip II and make it a bulwark against any revival of revolution. But four years before his death King Ferdinand remarried and had two children, both girls. A complex legal dispute developed as to whether, under the law of royal succession as it then stood in Spain, a woman could be the ruler. Ferdinand's wife, Maria Cristina, was young and liberal; the policies she would espouse as regent for her baby daughter had nothing in common with those of Prince Carlos. Soon after Ferdinand VII died, war broke out between his adherents and Maria Cristina's, lasting for seven years. The Carlists were finally defeated in 1840 by the treason of one of their leading generals. Two other Carlist wars followed. The hard-fought Third Carlist War, begun in reaction against the First Spanish Republic, ended in 1876 in another Carlist defeat. Its leader, Charles VII "of the Tradition" (known therefore as Carlos Septimo), still a young man in his twenties, was forced to leave Spain, but vowed to return and resume the struggle.

He was never able to do so, and it seemed to almost everyone that history had left him and his movement behind. Despite the increasing weakness and decline of Spain, support for Carlos Septimo and his claim to be the legitimate monarch had shrunk to a tiny minority by the time he died in 1909. His one son, James, half-heartedly maintained his father's claims. The Carlist movement, once vigorous and popular throughout the whole northern half of Spain, survived in attenuated form only in the province of Navarra, and at full strength in the mind of its great theoretician José Vázquez de Mella.

Then in October 1931, six months after the flight of King Alfonso XIII to England and five months after the assaults on Catholic churches and monasteries, James died without issue. The Carlist succession went to a man whose very existence nearly everyone in Spain had forgotten: Carlos Septimo's brother Alfonso, a commander at his brother's side during the

Third Carlist War, now 82, who had been living in exile in Italy and Austria for no less than *fifty-five years*, his commitment to the Carlist cause never wavering. He took the name of Alfonso Carlos, assumed command of what was left of the Carlist movement, renamed it the Traditionalist Communion, and saw it expand throughout Spain. In two and a half years its membership grew to nearly a million. Alfonso Carlos chose Manuel Fal Conde, a brilliant young lawyer from Sevilla, to lead it in Spain as Secretary-General. Under Fal Conde's dynamic leadership, by April 1935 there were some 700 Carlist councils in all parts of Spain, 350 study circles each with a priest as spiritual director, 250 active youth groups, 300 women's groups, numerous workers' groups, and at least a skeleton organization in every province. Two major daily newspapers supported Carlism, along with a widely circulated weekly which was explicitly a Carlist organ. There were Carlist libraries, orchestras, choirs, folk-dance societies, dramatic societies, and sports leagues.

Furthermore, Fal Conde had been in prison in 1932 with a young colonel named José Varela—they had both taken part in General Sanjurjo's abortive uprising that year—and there had converted Varela to Carlism. Varela trained the Carlist militia, known from the days of the First Carlist War of the 1830s as the *requeté*, to a high level of fighting skill. Weapons were found for them—some from abroad, some locally manufactured. They were organized into battalions, companies and platoons. Every man wore the traditional Carlist emblem, a red beret. By the beginning of 1936 their strength had reached 30,000 nationwide, with large additional numbers of potential recruits available in Navarra, where a solid majority of the people were Carlist. Ever since the Second Spanish Republic was established in 1931 with its anti-Catholic constitution and old warrior Alfonso Carlos had emerged, as though out of a time machine, to become their leader, the Carlists had been convinced that they would soon be fighting another crusade to save the Catholic Faith in Spain, so

obviously threatened by the revolutionaries and their sympathizers and other anti-Catholics in the republic.

That was indeed their destiny. It was the Carlists who proclaimed the last crusade and, above all, carried its banner.

In October 1934 Largo Caballero had called a general strike in Madrid whose only result was to have him thrown in prison, where he spent the next year reading and glorying in Lenin's works. Catalan separatists and the miners of the northern mountain province of Asturias had risen in armed revolt and been harshly suppressed by the government. Azaña was imprisoned for months, though he had had nothing to do with the rebellion. The Left vowed vengeance.

A year later, when Alejandro Lerroux's son and three leading members of his Radical Party were found guilty in October 1935 of accepting bribes to introduce a new type of roulette wheel called the "*straperlo*" into Spain, thereby making it impossible for the Prime Minister (widely believed to be personally involved in the scandal) to continue to govern, Gil Robles finally made his move to head a government. He also demanded major revisions of the 1931 constitution. President Alcalá Zamora opposed any change in the constitution, and feared and envied Gil Robles. Consequently he refused to ask him to form a government, though no other leader in the Cortes was in a position to do so, and decided to call for new elections. The constitution provided that the president could only dissolve the Cortes once during his five-year term of office, but Alcalá Zamora rather speciously argued that the first Cortes of the Second Republic, which he had dissolved in the fall of 1933, did not count because it was also a constituent assembly. He had a caretaker government set up under Manuel Portela Valladares, an active Freemason and historian of Spain's ancient Priscillian heresy, who was not even a member of the Cortes (nor were several of the ministers he selected). Gil Robles declared with some reason that the President was acting outside the law, and was so angry that he

asked some leading generals to consider military action against the government, but they refused to take it. On December 30, 1935 President Alcalá Zamora drafted the decree dissolving the Cortes, but kept it secret, for the moment merely declaring the Cortes "suspended." When ten percent of the Cortes deputies signed a demand for it to meet immediately, which under the constitution had to be obeyed unless the president dissolved the Cortes, Portela Valladares released the decree of dissolution on January 7, 1936. The decisive election campaign began.

Speaking in Madrid on January 12, Largo Caballero set the tone:

> Before the Republic, our duty was to bring it about; but with the Republic established, our duty is to bring about socialism. And when I speak of socialism, I do not speak of socialism alone; I speak of Marxist socialism. And in speaking of Marxist socialism, I speak of revolutionary socialism. . . . Our aspiration is the conquest of political power. Method? That which we are able to use![14]

Three days later a Popular Front was formed by five major Spanish parties: the Socialists, the Communists, Azañas Left Republicans, Martínez Barrio's Republican Union, and the separatist Catalan Esquerra led by 1934 rebel Luis Companys. The "Popular Front" strategy had been adopted by the Comintern in a major speech by its general secretary Georgi Dimitrov in July 1935. It called upon Communists in democratic countries to join with other left-wing parties to gain power—a tactic, rejected by Lenin but favored by Stalin, which had almost succeeded in China in the 1920s until frustrated at the last moment by Chiang Kai-shek. The platform of the Spanish Popular Front, proclaimed January 15, called for the release of everyone imprisoned since the 1933 elections, regardless of whether they were political prisoners or common criminals;[15] the reinstatement of

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[14]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, p. 246.

[15]Only 6,000 of about 20,000 prisoners had been arrested in connection with the uprisings of 1934 (*ibid.*, p. 381).

all workers and civil servants dismissed since those elections; and retention of the constitution with no major changes, with "educational reform" (meaning the closing of Catholic schools) to proceed as had been planned by the Azaña government. Promises were also made to push land reform, a public works program, and social welfare legislation. On January 22 Largo Caballero revealed still more clearly what this program meant in his eyes:

> We have always intended to forge a united party that has nothing to do either directly or indirectly with the bourgeoisie; a party that adopts as its standard the armed insurrection for the conquest of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat; a party that, in case of war, will have nothing to do with the bourgeoisie; that ought not and will not lend it aid; a party that, guided by the norms of democratic centralism, achieves a single will, unanimous decision in all its efforts. We are on the way to achieving such a party.[16]

The term "democratic centralism" was one of Lenin's favorites, his euphemism for absolute, totalitarian rule of and by the Communist Party. No recorded statement of Lenin's exceeds in savagery Largo Caballero's offhand remark in the January 28 issue of his party newspaper *El Socialista*: "I desire a republic without class warfare; but for this it is necessary for one class to disappear."[17] Three days later, in that same newspaper, Largo Caballero openly stated his commitment to communism: "I am a Marxian socialist. Communism is the natural evolution of socialism, its last and definitive stage."[18] On February 9 *El Socialista* printed this even more explicit statement, though from another source: "We are determined to do in Spain what was

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[16]Payne, *Spanish Revolution*, p. 180.

[17]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, p. 246.

[18]Richard Pattee, *This Is Spain* (Milwaukee, 1951), p. 177, citing *El Socialista* of February 1, 1936.

done in Russia. The plan of Spanish socialism and of Russian communism are the same."[19] The day before, lecturing on "historical parallels between the Russian and Spanish Revolutions," left Socialist Luis Araquistain said that conditions in the two countries on the eve of revolution were analogous, with a strong workers' movement and a weak government; he predicted "that Spain may very well be the second country where the proletarian revolution triumphs and becomes consolidated,"[20] after which it would be protected by the Soviet Union.

Small wonder that José Diaz, head of the Spanish Communist Party, declared on February 11:

> There is one man today who has put all his intelligence and all his energy to the service of the United [Popular] Front in our country, so that when the time comes it will triumph: Comrade Largo Caballero. . . . We could recount the history of the international movement of the proletariat and see that in the era of Largo Caballero it is very difficult to find another case of evolution such as his, especially with regard to everything that has occurred in these last days. There is a considerable mass who follow him with a very clear vision, because they have hopes of what will follow as a result of the revolutionary position that he has embraced.[21]

Then and since, many have accused the Spanish Right of "over-reacting" to the Popular Front challenge. But the statements here quoted speak for themselves. The goal of the most dynamic and dominant leader of the Popular Front was maximum violent revolution followed by the imposition of a totalitarian state. Largo Caballero headed a union (UGT) with a membership of more than one million. He could count on the support in any revolutionary violence of an anarchist union

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[19]Joaquín Arraras, *Historia de la Segunda República Española*, Volume IV (Madrid, 1968), p. 37.

[20]Payne, *Spanish Revolution*, p. 194n.

[21]David T. Cattell, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War* (Berkeley Ca, 1955), p. 219.

(CNT) almost as large. His Socialist opponent, Prieto, was outclassed; he had almost no impact on the campaign, while Largo Caballero was winning most of the local elections in the Socialist Party during these weeks. The election was literally a matter of life and death for Spain. In the words of the most eloquent monarchist deputy in the Cortes, José Calvo Sotelo:

> The possibility must be admitted that on the day after [the elections] Spain will awaken to the red glare of a stormy Marxist triumph, which will cast down our foundations, our history, our spirituality, our economy, our morality, and all we are. But this will never be, because God does not wish it and we will not permit it![22]

Inevitably though reluctantly, because their own divisions were deep, the Spanish Right on February 4 formed a National Counterrevolutionary Front to oppose the Popular Front, including Gil Robles and Calvo Sotelo, and also the Carlists. The political philosophy of the Traditionalist Communion rejected any strong central government, parliamentary or otherwise; except for national defense and foreign affairs, they wanted Spain governed by its separate provinces. (The Carlist motto was "*Dios! Patria! Fueros! Rey!*"—God, the fatherland, local rights, and the king, in that order.) Therefore in the past Carlists had hesitated to run as candidates for the national parliament. But in this moment of crisis old Alfonso Carlos from Vienna (he would almost certainly have been imprisoned had he set foot on Spanish soil) directed his people "to put up as many candidates as possible in defense of religion and country."[23]

Election day was February 16, a Sunday. Making a correct tabulation of the results baffled people at the time and has baffled historians ever since, because of their great complexity combined with the arcane system for according seats in the

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[22]Arraras, *Historia de la Segunda República Española*, IV, 44.
[23]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, p. 380.

Cortes to various regions and the further complication of recounts, runoffs, and special elections held here and there when the initial votes were invalidated by some official body. No two historians agree on exactly how many seats each party finally won. But the Popular Front emerged clearly victorious, with an absolute majority in the Cortes. According to meticulous historian Richard Robinson, the Popular Front had 263 seats compared to 133 for the Right and 77 for the center, giving it an absolute majority of 26. The popular vote gave a contrary result: a plurality of 4,570,744 votes for the Right, 4,346,559 for the Popular Front, 340,073 for the Center, and 141,137 for the Basque Nationalists, who were separatists but also mostly good Catholics. The largest representation in the Popular Front was 88 seats for the Socialists, followed closely by 79 for Azaña's Republican Left. A large majority of the Right deputies were in Gil Robles' Catholic CEDA, with 101 seats; the Carlists were next with 15, approximately equal to the 14 seats gained by the Communists. The Falange ran candidates but they received a miniscule vote of only about 40,000. The Popular Front won all the major cities, but the Right received many votes there nevertheless; in Madrid the Right had 186,422 votes compared to 224,540 for the Popular Front.[24]

Few had expected the Popular Front to win an absolute majority in the Cortes. Anyone could see that the shock effect on the Right would be tremendous and that there was a grave threat of civil war. At four o'clock in the morning on the day after the election Gil Robles went to Prime Minister Portela Valladares with a request that he be included in the new government, if only as a "typist," to calm the fears of the Right, and that the government declare a state of maximum emergency. Portela Valladares, the dithering academic whom Prime Minister Lerroux had "rediscoverd as a politician . . . on a beach in northern

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[24]*Ibid.*, pp. 247-249, 383. See also Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), pp. 156-157.

Spain in the summer of 1934,"[25] was totally out of his depth in a crisis of this magnitude. He was too old, he said, to take any strong measures. All he wanted was to get out of office. Strikes began; in Valencia and Oviedo the anarchists were opening the prisons. General Francisco Franco, the army chief of staff, refused to lead any military action without the approval of someone in a position to speak for the government, which was not given. On February 19, just three days after the election, President Alcalá Zamora asked Azaña to return as prime minister. He agreed, and selected a cabinet. But his was a minority government, for the Socialists and Communists refused to join it. Their goal was now full revolution.

The Azaña government's first major action, taken February 21, was to release all prisoners, the first plank in the Popular Front platform, providing instant reinforcement for the revolutionaries, and wholly ignoring the constitutional requirement that political amnesties must be approved by majority vote of the Cortes, which had not yet had time to convene. The next day the government dismissed General Franco as chief of staff of the army and transferred him to the distant Canary Islands. This made sense from the Left's standpoint, for Franco, the most intelligent and youngest general in the army and a hero of the war in Morocco, was a devout Catholic and a dedicated foe of revolution. (Just before leaving for the Canary Islands he told President Alcalá Zamora: "I can guarantee that, whatever circumstances may arise, wherever I am, there will be no communism.")[26] But a week later, in a move that defies rational explanation, the government transferred General Emilio Mola, potentially almost as great a danger to them as Franco, from Morocco to Pamplona in Navarra, the heart of armed and resurgent Carlism.

For the Carlists, Fal Conde had declared on the day the new government was formed: "The Traditionalist Communion will

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[25]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 149.
[26]Paul Preston, *Franco* (New York, 1993), p. 121.

fully recover its personality and freedom of movement. Coalitions, fronts and blocs are done with!"[27] The Requeté were ordered to a state of war readiness.

On February 23 the Azaña government suspended payment of rent by tenant farmers in the south of Spain, Andalusia and Extremadura, and reinstated Luis Companys, who had led the armed rebellion in Catalonia in 1934, as head of the Generalitat, the local government of Catalonia. On the 29th it ordered the rehiring of all workers dismissed after January 1, 1934 for striking, with compensation for lost wages, and suspended all evictions of agricultural tenants throughout the country.

On March 8, several generals known for their conservative views met in Madrid, three of them in transit to new assignments—Franco posted to the Canary Islands, Mola to Pamplona, and former Inspector-General Manuel Goded to the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean. Also participating in the meeting was the Carlist Varela, now a general too; former Under-Secretary of War Joaquín Fanjul; and several other high-ranking officers. None was yet ready to attempt a coup, but they were now perforce beginning to consider what circumstances might make it necessary. They agreed they would have to act if Largo Caballero should become prime minister; if the government should disband the Civil Guard—the national police; or if the country should slip into evident anarchy. Varela urged an immediate rising, but Franco and Mola said they must have more civilian support.

Before leaving Madrid, Franco had gone to see Prime Minister Azaña to warn him about the growing threat of communism in Spain. Like so many other intellectuals before and after him, Azaña scoffed at the idea.

He might have felt differently had he known of the letter sent March 4 from the Communist Party central committee to the

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[27]Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge, England, 1975), p. 229.

executive committee of the Socialist Party, proposing Socialist-Communist Worker-Peasant Alliance groups at all levels, local to national, playing the role of soviets, with the terms of the alliance to be:

> Complete independence vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie and a complete break of the social democratic bloc with the bourgeoisie; prior achievement of unity of action; recognition of the need for the revolutionary overthrow of the domination of the bourgeoisie and the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of soviets; renunciation of support for the national bourgeoisie in the event of an imperialist war; construction of the unified party on the basis of democratic centralism, assuring unity of will and of action, tempered by the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks.[28]

The Socialist executive committee did not reply to this letter directly, but the next day it proposed a joint committee of two representatives from each of the "working class parties of the Popular Front" to coordinate their efforts. During March the Socialist and Communist youth organizations of Spain agreed to merge under the guidance of crypto-Communist Alvarez del Vayo, Comintern agent Vittorio Codovila, and youth leader Santiago Carrillo, future head of the Spanish Communist Party.[29] On March 19 the Madrid section of the Socialist Party, led by enthusiastic followers of Largo Caballero, declared its intention to ask the next national congress of the Socialist Party to unite with the Communist Party. The Madrid Socialists also drafted a new program to be submitted to its next congress. Its preamble was a complete endorsement of Communist-style ultimate revolution, the destruction of existing society down to its roots:

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[28]Payne, *Spanish Revolution*, pp. 187-188.

[29]Antony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1983), p. 46. Beevor's confirmation of the role of these men in the merger is particularly significant since his history shows a strong sympathy for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War.

> The illusion that the proletarian socialist revolution . . . can be achieved by reforming the existing state must be eliminated. . . . There is no course but to destroy its roots. . . . Imperceptibly, the dictatorship of the proletariat or workers' democracy will be converted into a full democracy, without classes, from which the coercive state will gradually disappear. The instrument of the dictatorship will be the Socialist party, which will exercise this dictatorship during the period of transition from one society to another.[30]

Also in March, moderate Socialist Gabriel Mario de Coca published a book ending with this lament:

> I close my work with an impression of Bolshevist victory in every sector of the [Spanish Socialist] party. The Socialist parliamentary authority in the Cortes will be impregnated with a strong Leninist tone. Prieto will have few deputies on his side while Besteiro [another moderate Socialist] will be completely isolated as a Marxist dissenter. . . . The outlook that all this leaves for the future of the working class and of the nation could not be more pessimistic. The Bolshevist centipede dominates the proletariat's horizon and Marxist analysis indicates that it is on its way to another of its resounding victories.[31]

The sense of helplessness and despair before the advancing cataclysm which exudes from these words of Mario da Coca found its counterpoint in the order of the day on March 7 by Jaime del Burgo, chief of the Carlist Requeté of Pamplona: "We will fall upon the barricades of the revolution and sweep away forever, at the point of our bayonets, this filthy foreign Marxism!"[32]

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[30]James W. Cortada, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* (London, 1982), p. 228.

[31]Payne, *Spanish Revolution*, p. 188.

[32]Luis Redondo and Juan de Zavala, *El Requeté; La Tradición no muere*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona, 1957), p. 307.

The crusading hour was indeed approaching. On the next day, March 8, a Sunday, a revolutionary mob seized control of the southern port city of Cádiz, burning five churches, a convent, a seminary, and a Catholic school. When General Franco came to Cádiz two days later to embark for the Canary Islands, saw what had happened there, and learned that the military governor of the city had watched a convent burn within sight of his barracks, he exploded in a rare outburst of anger: "Is it possible that the troops of a barracks saw a sacrilegious crime being committed and that you just stood by with your arms folded?" When the governor replied that the new government in Madrid had forbidden him to intervene in such matters, Franco was unappeased. "Such orders," he snapped, "since they are unworthy, should never be obeyed by an officer of our Army."[33] He refused to shake the governor's hand as he left him.

Later that week five churches were burned in Granada and five also in central Madrid, notably the Church of San Luis, which was destroyed by fire without any effort being made to protect or to save it, though it stood only 200 paces from the Interior Ministry building. Clearly the non-intervention orders which the military governor of Cádiz had cited to Franco were still in effect. The government was much more diligent in cracking down on the Falange, which was officially banned March 16 after its leader José Antonio was arrested on the charge of keeping arms without a license.

In the central Spanish city of Albacete on March 17 revolutionaries burned the Center of Catholic Studies and two parish churches. Over the next three days 14 more churches were burned there—most of those in the city and its vicinity—and 375 holy images disappeared. The churches destroyed included one built during the thirteenth century, and another containing a statue of Christ attributed to Berruguete.

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[33]Preston, *Franco*, pp. 122-123.

As peasants in southern Spain began taking over land from the great estates at the end of March, with no check from the government (and later recognition of the land they had seized as theirs), Gil Robles urged Azaña to turn away from the Socialists and Communists and toward the Center before it was too late. But Manuel Azaña was a broken reed. However much he might personally deplore some of what was happening (and he had already made it clear, and was to repeat, that he did not really deplore the destruction of churches), he had neither the means nor the will to act against it. More and more he was seen as playing the role of Kerensky to Largo Caballero's Lenin.

From February 16 to the end of March 178 buildings (including many churches) had been burned throughout Spain and 197 more sacked. There had been 169 people killed and many hundreds wounded.[34] Anarchy loomed, and was hailed as it approached by the hundreds of thousands of organized anarchists in the great CNT union.

Late in March, Carlist leader Fal Conde went to Portugal to speak with the exiled José Sanjurjo, who had been the ranking general of the Spanish army who led the unsuccessful uprising against the Republic in 1932. He had been born in Pamplona during the Third Carlist War, in which his father had served in the Requeté and been killed in action. Fal Conde and his aides dressed Sanjurjo's son Pepito as a Requeté, with his own red beret; Sanjurjo was deeply moved, and he and the Carlists agreed to support one another, with Sanjurjo to take command of the Requeté when they went into battle. (By now nearly all the Carlist leadership was convinced of the inevitability of a war to save the Faith in Spain.) Plans for a Carlist coup in Madrid were already being made by various Carlist leaders and supported by General Varela, but they were still premature, and official approval for such a venture had not yet been given by Fal Conde or

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[34]José Maria Iribarren, *El general Mola*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1945), p. 45.

Alfonso Carlos. On March 31 most of the Right deputies temporarily withdrew from the Cortes. Many did not return.

The revolutionaries were having their way. Government and society were disintegrating. The first general persecution of Catholics in Spain since the time of the Roman Emperor Diocletian was just over the horizon; all who saw one of the burning churches or heard the insults flung at priests and monks and nuns and devout laymen and women could feel it coming.[35] From this war and this persecution there would be no place to hide.

But since Pelayo's last stand more than twelve hundred years before, Spain had bred legions of true sons of the Church Militant. Even after a century of degeneration, many remained who would never submit to the modern infidel. Spaniards had made the longest crusade in the history of the world, the 770-year war of the Reconquest. Not all of them had forgotten it. Their priests and monks were ready for martyrdom; their crusading warriors would sell their lives dear to the enemies of Christ. In this very year they would once again take the cross together, and march as to Jerusalem.

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[35]In Toledo a seller of frogs, who called himself Ranero, made a habit for months before the outbreak of the war of appearing at the doors of churches at the times of Sunday Mass with strings of skinned frogs, which "dangled like miniature human beings," pushing them in the faces of women coming to Mass and saying: "'This is what you and your daughers will look like after we have raped and killed you!'" (Cecil Eby, *The Siege of the Alcazar* [New York, 1965], p. 59).

Spring
(April-June)

By an unbroken tradition extending all the way back to the fall of the Roman empire in the West, the Archbishop of Toledo is the primate of Spain, for Toledo is Spain's ancient capital. Crowning a gigantic crag towering over the Tagus River in the midst of a broad dry plain, Toledo is virtually impregnable to attack—it has never been stormed against a vigorous defense in the whole history of war in Spain. After the Moors had held Toledo for more than 350 years, the Christians regained it by negotiations in the time of El Cid. They glorified it with one of Spain's most magnificent cathedrals. Isabel and Fernando built here their splendid church of St. John of the Kings. The banner Don John of Austria carried into battle against the Turks at Lepanto hung in Toledo's church of the Holy Cross. In one of its humble parish churches glowed the greatest work of Spain's supreme painter, El Greco, who dwelt in Toledo for most of his adult life: "The Burial of the Count of Orgaz."

On May 6, 1931, shortly after the flight of King Alfonso XIII and the formation of the Second Spanish Republic, Cardinal Pedro Segura, Archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain, issued a pastoral letter urging his flock to respect and obey the new government and to participate actively as Catholics in its political life. But he also made a point of praising the departed king, and it was known that he believed the establishment of a republic was not good for Spain. His alleged "interference in politics" because of these sentiments was made an excuse for the burning and looting of many Spanish churches a week after the release of his pastoral letter. On returning in June from consultations with Pope Pius XI in Rome, Cardinal Segura was arrested

and expelled from the country on the intriguing charge of "endangering the public spirit." Two months later the government declared—though utterly without authority to do so—that he was removed as Archbishop of Toledo and stripped of his episcopal rank. The reason given for this action was that he had instructed the Spanish bishops to sell Church property and send the money out of Spain before the anti-Catholic government could confiscate it.

At this point Pope Pius XI was trying to cultivate better relations with anti-Catholic governments in Catholic countries, such as then existed in Mexico as well as in Spain. He was hoping that the anti-Catholic provisions of the constitution of the Second Spanish Republic, then still in the drafting stage, might be removed or moderated in response to concessions by the Church. Therefore, in October, the Pope consented to Segura's removal and exile. After a long wait before naming a replacement, in 1933 he appointed as the new Archbishop of Toledo Isidro Gomá, a Catalan who had been rector of the seminary of the archdiocese of Tarragona for more than twenty years and then Bishop of Tarazona. He was reputed to be a political moderate sympathetic to the Catalan nationalists. In 1935 the Pope made him a Cardinal.

But serious churchmen cannot be measured by political standards. Cardinal Gomá could read the signs of the times in the spring of 1936 as well as any Communist or Carlist. He knew they portended far more than a mere strife of parties—that for the first time in its Christian history his country faced the strong possiblity of the destruction of its traditional faith. He did not yet believe the time had come to declare openly all that he foresaw; but in a letter to Father Ledochowski, general of the Jesuits (which order had already been expelled from Spain as Cardinal Segura had been) he let the warning bells toll:

> With reference now to the general state of things in Spain, prospects are frankly most evil, with no remedy to be seen, humanly speaking. The revolution is triumphant,

> without scruples in its advance to secure its grip; with the insensitivity of the government in the face of the unheard-of atrocities that the Church has suffered in recent weeks, the threat of applying the atheistic constitution in its totality, the confusion of the political elements of the Right, some drawn apart from others by angry grudges; loss of the spiritual rigor of our Christian people, the effect of past disillusionments; economic burdens; the imminence of municipal elections which will bring revolutionary principles and practices into the heart of the people; fear and cowardice which has debilitated organizations of religious; the restriction and reduced circulation of the Catholic press; the imminent establishment of greatly expanded lay education; such is the spectacle that this moment shows us. No remedy for this appears but an extraordinary providence of God.[1]

If there were any doubt of the truth of this warning by the primate of Spain, it was laid to rest by comments made by Prime Minister Azaña in the Cortes April 3 and 16 in response to criticism of the government's conspicuous failure to protect the churches:

> The Republican government and the president do not undertake to justify anything or explain anything away. We must examine this situation like men and understand things in their broad human sense. I am scandalized that anyone should state how horrible that three churches have been burned. I also say, if not how horrible, what nonsense and what a pity! [April 3]
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> . . .
>
> I am persuaded that flames are endemic to Spain. In the past heretics were burned and today saints, even if in the form of statues or images. [April 16][2]

Attacks on churches and objects of holy devotion were evidently amusing to the chief of the Spanish government in the

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[1]Anastasio Granados, *El cardenal Gomá, primado de España* (Madrid, 1969), pp. 73-74.

[2]Richard Pattee, *This Is Spain* (Milwaukee, 1951), pp, 183 and 222, citing *Diaro de Sesiones* of the Cortes for the indicated days.

spring of 1936, a matter for joking rather than for action. But they were no joke to the Church's committed enemies, or to her committed defenders.

On April 3 the Cortes, holding its first formal session since the election, chose Diego Martínez Barrio, a political ally of Azaña, as its presiding officer and proceeded immediately and surprisingly to impeach President Alcalá Zamora, a move the majority of the cabinet had decided upon the preceding day. The grounds, oddly enough, were his dismissal of the previous Cortes when the constitution prohibited the president from dismissing the Cortes more than once in his five-year term of office. The oddity was for a government to impeach its President for calling an election that brought them to power. But the Popular Front government did not trust Alcalá Zamora. Knowing that he remained a Catholic and was opposed to revolution, they feared he might dissolve the Cortes for a third time and call another election, or even support a military coup against them. The Right regarded Alcalá Zamora as a weakling or worse, and made no effort to save him. His political fate was sealed. On April 7 he was removed from office, to be replaced the next month (as was the government's intention from the beginning) by Azaña, who had no Catholic sympathies nor much use for the military and would do nothing that might return power to the Right. Azaña does not seem to have been significantly involved in carrying out this surprising deposition, which Salvador de Madariaga extravagantly condemned as "the most glaring denial of logic the history of a free nation can show."[3] Alcalá Zamora left Spain for South America just before the civil war broke out in July, and never came back.

His removal had virtually no effect on the immediate political situation, but had one important and unexpected long-term

[3]Salvador de Madariaga, *Spain* (New York, 1943), p. 347.

consequence. One of the most republican generals, Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, a rakishly handsome, arrogant and contentious figure who had been thrown in jail by Primo de Rivera and had turned against the Catholic Church while enrolled in a seminary in his youth, had a daughter married to Alcalá Zamora's only son. Queipo de Llano was outraged by the impeachment of his daughter's father-in-law. On April 13 he visited General Mola, now in Pamplona, to tell him he wished to join in the rising against the government being planned, and soon persuaded General Miguel Cabanellas, another republican stationed at Segovia, to do likewise. Queipo de Llano, a man of extraordinary dash and daring—unfortunately almost his only admirable qualities—played a vital if not always savory role in the history of the first months of the Spanish Civil War. Had it not been for the removal of Alcalá Zamora he would probably have fought on the other side. His initial service to the rising was indispensable, but later his cruelty and injustice traduced its Catholic and crusading character.

April 14, two days after Easter, was the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic. The day before, Falangists had shot and killed on a Madrid street a judge who had sentenced one of their members to thirty years in prison for murdering a distributor of Socialist newspapers. During the public commemoration of the anniversary in Madrid an unidentified man, probably a Falangist, attempted to kill Azaña with a bomb. Azaña was not injured, but one of the Assault Guards (a police force generally loyal to the government) shot and killed a member of the Civil Guard (whose loyalties were mixed like the army's) whom he believed was preparing to shoot Azaña. (To think that the revolution could be stopped by shooting the helpless Azaña was the height of folly, but logic did not flourish in Spain during these tumultuous days.) The funeral of the Civil Guardsman three days later was the occasion for a gun battle between Socialists and Falangists during the funeral procession and another between Falangists and Assault Guards at the ceme-

tery. Lieutenant José Castillo of the Assault Guards played a leading part in the cemetery battle, earning him the bitter hatred of the Falangists. At least twelve people were killed in the fighting. Gil Robles, speaking in the Cortes, delivered another solemn warning:

> [When] we, the parties that act within legality, begin to lose control of our masses, we begin to appear failures in their eyes; the idea of violence to fight against persecution starts to germinate among our people . . . a time will come when, as a citizenly obligation of conscience, we shall have to turn to our masses and tell them: "Within legality you have no protection, because the law, which is the supreme guarantee of [the rights of] citizenship, does not enjoy the government's support; in our party we cannot defend you; with anguish we must tell you to go to other organizations, to other political nuclei that offer you at least the attraction of revenge."[4]

At a public meeting on April 18, the day after the bloody funeral of the Civil Guardsman, the Socialist Party of Madrid formally demanded that the forthcoming national congress of the Socialist Party call openly for the dictatorship of the proletariat, seizure of all Church property, and suppression of all religious orders. Once again the centrality of the religious issue in the build-up to, as well as the waging of the Spanish Civil War was unmistakably demonstrated. Just across the French frontier in the Pyrenees, Prince Javier of Bourbon-Parma, now the designated heir of the childless Alfonso Carlos, to whom the religious issue was central also, had taken up residence in the little town of St. Jean de Luz during Holy Week. Every few days he conferred with Fal Conde or the Carlist military leaders in Navarra. The Carlists continued to operate independently of the regular army generals, except for Varela (who was imprisoned in Cádiz during April) and Sanjurjo, exiled in Portugal. General Mola,

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[4]Richard A. H. Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain; the Right, the Republic and Revolution, 1931-1936* (London, 1970), pp. 259-260.

though stationed in the capital of Carlist Navarra, was not yet working with them. During the latter part of April he crossed the Rubicon with a confidential circular letter to selected officers whom he felt could be trusted:

> The most grave circumstances through which the nation is passing owing to an electoral pact, the immediate consequence of which has been to make the government prisoner of the revolutionary organizations, is fatefully leading Spain to a chaotic situation that can only be avoided by means of violent action. Therefore, the elements that love the country must of necessity organize themselves for rebellion, with the aim of conquering power and imposing therefrom order, peace, and justice.[5]

May Day was marked by strikes and parades in most of the principal cities of Spain. Thousands marched down Castellana Street in Madrid, making the clenched-fist salute, singing the Marxist hymn "Internationale," carrying portraits of Lenin, Stalin, and Largo Caballero. Prieto, speaking in Cuenca in central Spain, called for Socialist entry into Azaña's government and denounced "excesses that leave behind as evidence of the people's exertions some charred images, some burnt altars or some church doors blackened by flames."[6] He warned of the growing danger of a military coup. Largo Caballero's followers accused him of supporting such a coup and began threatening his life. These were not idle threats. Before the month was over Prieto was shot at and wounded by some of Largo Caballero's militant followers while speaking at a Socialist rally in Écija, barely escaping in a car through a hail of bullets. During May membership in the Spanish Communist Party reached 60,000, a total

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[5]*Ibid.*, p. 279.
[6]*Ibid.*, p. 260.

comparable to the listed membership of the Socialist Party (not counting membership in its giant UGT union).[7]

On May 4 a number of churches in Madrid were attacked. Three nuns and two lay women were killed by a mob, and several monks and nuns attacked and severely beaten.

Early in May Carlist Prince Javier was in Portugal conferring with General Sanjurjo. They agreed that if the Carlists and the Spanish army rose together against the government, Sanjurjo would head a "provisional government for the restoration of monarchy,"[8] not specifying the monarch to be restored; but if the Carlists had to rise alone, Sanjurjo would support Alfonso Carlos as king. Sanjurjo sent a letter to Mola by the Prince which assumed he would lead any army uprising which might take place, and another letter to Alfonso Carlos, declaring his "respect and adherence"[9] to him. If not quite a full endorsement of Alfonso Carlos' claim to be king, this was very close to it. Sanjurjo seemed on the verge of becoming a Carlist, as Varela had done.

On May 10 a special electoral college convened for this one occasion overwhelmingly voted Azaña President of Spain. The electoral meeting was enlivened by fistfights in the corridors between supporters of Largo Caballero and Prieto. On the same day the anarchist union CNT was holding its national congress at Zaragoza, capital of Aragon in northern Spain. It denounced the Azaña government as too conservative and voted to accept Largo Caballero's offer of "revolutionary syndical unity" so long as the Socialists continued to refuse collaboration with the moderate left or the existing political system of the republic and to "move directly toward the total destruction of the existing politico-economic order." The congress' political program included the closing of all churches, the seizure of all factories and all tracts

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[7]Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* (New York, 1970), p. 193.

[8]Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge, England, 1975), p. 243.

[9]Luis Redondo and Juan de Zavala, *El Requeté; la Tradición no muere*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona, 1957), p. 348.

of more than 50 hectares of land by "the people," who would then set up the "confederation of autonomous communes" which was the only form of government acceptable to the anarchists. They need not have worried about the Socialist Party entering the government, despite Prieto's call for it. On May 12 the Socialist deputies in the Cortes voted 49-19 against doing so.[10]

This left newly elected President Azaña no alternative but the formation of another minority government staffed by Left Republicans but spurned by both Socialists and Communists. He gave this thankless task to Santiago Casares Quiroga, a thin, nervous, tubercular Galician with a burning hatred of the Church but little capacity to lead. A few days before becoming prime minister, Casares Quiroga had told Calvo Sotelo that "social revolution does not worry me."[11] Most of his cabinet ministers were drawn from Azaña's Left Republican party. Speaking to the Cortes for the first time as prime minister on May 19, Casares Quiroga pledged total hostility to fascism, and said he needed no support outside the Popular Front. Despite the excesses of the Falange (still forming a small minority of the Spanish Right), "fascism" was hardly the principal danger to Spain at that moment. As Calvo Sotelo declared in a thundering speech before the Cortes May 29:

> Parliament is haughtily, pompously presiding over the Spanish anarchy; the legislative power gives an impression of normality, while all the other powers, the whole of Spanish life, are the personification of chaos, disorder, and abnormality. . . . You are living on anarchy . . . because to repress it you would have to forfeit the political oxygen which these extreme forces give you. Have the courage to die slaying anarchy and Spain will be saved![12]

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[10]Payne, *Spanish Revolution*, pp. 195, 199-201; Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1986), p. 182.

[11]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, p. 260.

[12]*Ibid.*, p. 266.

On May 30 Mola, writing to Sanjurjo, recognized the older general's leadership and right to head the provisional government to be set up after the projected military coup, while Sanjurjo acknowledged Mola as "director" of the plans for the army rising. Mola's plans included a fallback to Carlist Navarra and a fight to the finish there if the rising failed elsewhere. During June he made the first specific assignments of officers to command the rising in various cities, though many of them were later changed. But the two most important assignments did not change: General Franco and Colonel Juan de Yagüe to Morocco.

Despite being separated from Spain by the Straits of Gibraltar, Morocco was vital to the uprising because, since the Rif war in which the native Muslims of Morocco had first defeated the Spanish and then been defeated by them, the greater part of the Spanish professional army was stationed there. Only soldiers of long service could be counted on to follow orders to strike against the constituted government without qualms and the danger of mutiny. This was especially true of the numerous Moroccan Muslims the Spanish had taken into their army, who cared nothing at all for the politics of Spain. Yagüe, a blunt and hard-hitting soldier who was one of the few high-ranking Spanish officers then to sympathize with the Falange, was already in Morocco and could plan the rising there in advance. Franco was isolated on the Canary Islands out in the Atlantic and would have to be brought to Morocco, where he had gained a high reputation for courage and good fortune in the war against the Muslim rebels. Despite his relative youth (he was 44) he was one of the highest-ranking Spanish generals. He had been commandant of Spain's military academy and thereby had come to know most of the officers. Though usually cold and aloof in public and a poor public speaker, he could be charming in personal conversation, was not overbearing in manner, and was generally well liked and trusted. Most officers in personal touch with him would obey him in a crisis.

No one then thought of Franco as the leader of the generals' uprising. That was to be Sanjurjo, as soon as he could be brought in from Portugal; for the time being it was Mola. But Francisco Franco was destined to become the *caudillo* of Spain for 38 years, one of the most controversial figures in modern history.

In presenting Franco, we must first divest ourselves of myth. He was not a tyrant or an oppressor, and certainly no totalitarian. He may have been too severe toward his enemies, but he never enslaved his own people.[13] He was not eager for power, though he came to believe God had chosen him to save Spain from destruction and persecution of his fellow Catholics. He did not allow elections to choose a government or a completely free press, because to him that meant a return to the revolutionary anarchy of the Second Spanish Republic, but during all his years of rule after the Civil War the Spanish people could say what they liked in the cafes and plazas, and regularly did so. He opposed Hitler, frustrating him and his plans by sheer stubbornness in 1940, the year of Hitler's greatest power. He accepted arms from Germany and Italy during the Spanish Civil War because no one else would give or sell him any, and the Soviet Union was supplying Largo Caballero's government with large quantities of some of the best modern weapons. In the spring of 1936 in the Canary Islands Franco walked in the Valley of the Shadow; he and his adored wife and daughter were under 24-hour guard against assassination. Always a strong Catholic, his faith became far more profound under these conditions. In the words of Stanley Payne, a noted historian of Spain, "his thoughts turned more to religion than at any previous time in his life. Franco's practice of almost daily devotions dated from these months. This

[13]I had the opportunity to observe this in person, spending part of the last four summers of Franco's life in the Spain he ruled (1971-75), then visiting Communist-ruled Eastern Europe in the summer of 1980. There could hardly be a greater difference in atmosphere and way of life between Franco's Spain and the lands communism had enslaved.

intensified religious life in turn contributed to what eventually became a sense of mission."[14] Of Franco, Paul Johnson has well said:

> The Nationalists won [the Spanish Civil War] primarily because of the capacity and judgment of Franco. Though Franco was an unlovable man and is unlikely ever to win the esteem of historians, he must be accounted one of the most successful public men of the century. His cold heart went with a cool head, great intelligence and formidable reserves of courage and will. . . . The soldier-statesman he most resembled was Wellington, a figure much admired in Spain. Franco thought war a hateful business, from which gross cruelty was inseparable; it might sometimes be necessary to advance civilization. He was in the tradition of the Romans, the crusaders, the conquistadors, the *tercios* of Parma. . . . Franco was never a fascist or had the smallest belief in any kind of Utopia or system.[15]

Franco was short and pudgy and looked insignificant, except for his large and commanding dark brown eyes. But he had a lion's heart and a steel-hard backbone. More than any other man, he saved Spain from the worst fate that could befall any nation in the twentieth century—conquest by communism—giving his people instead a generation and a half of peace, security, prosperity, and personal—if not political—freedom in which the Catholic Faith was restored and flourished throughout the country. The Valley of the Fallen will stand against the sky as his just monument when all his venomous critics are dust.

During the spring of 1936 many Catholic schools throughout Spain were closed and some physically destroyed. On June 3 CEDA Cortes deputy Pabón said that in central Castile alone

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[14]Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison WI, 1987), p. 91.

[15]Paul Johnson, *Modern Times; the World from the Twenties to the Nineties*, rev. ed. (New York, 1992), pp. 330-331.

from April 20 to May 15, 79 schools with over five thousand pupils had been burned down or closed. On June 4 Gil Robles with most of the CEDA deputies walked out of the Cortes because of what was being done to the Catholic schools. But the government was obdurate. Socialist deputies stressed that the constitution required the closing of Catholic schools and should now be rigorously enforced on this point. Education Minister Barnés declared on June 4 that the Catholics must lose their schools because they had not done enough to develop secular state education when they controlled the government. God was to be excluded from all Spanish education, come what might.

On June 4 Mola had his first meeting with a major Carlist leader, José Oriol, Carlist chief in Alava province. Oriol offered Mola full support in his planned rising, and put him in touch for the first time with Fal Conde. On June 9 Mola met with the Count of Rodezno, a Navarrese who had been secretary-general of the Traditionalist Communion for all Spain before Fal Conde. He promised Rodezno that the old red and gold flag of Spain, which the Republic had abolished, would be flown by the armies of the uprising.

Meanwhile, on June 5, Mola circulated a secret memorandum on how Spain would be governed after the military coup: the existing constitution would be suspended and the Cortes dismissed, and a "directory" of officers, consisting of a president and four others, would act as a provisional government, ruling by decree until a new constituent assembly met. However, the republic would be maintained rather than the monarchy restored, and Church and state would continue to be separated. This was contrary to Carlist goals, so on June 11 Fal Conde sent José Zamanillo to Mola with a set of firm Carlist conditions for supporting the military rising Mola was planning: (1) it was to be conducted under the red and gold flag of the monarchy (Mola had already promised that to Rodezno); (2) the republican constitution was to be scrapped; (3) the state was to be Catholic rather than secular; (4) political parties were to be abolished and

a corporate state established (in which different social elements were represented rather than the whole population of legislative districts voting for representatives in the Cortes); (5) the provisional government must have a Carlist minister of education, propaganda, and Church relations, while the minister for local government and corporations was to be either a Carlist or someone fully acceptable to them.[16]

Mola replied to Zamanillo two days later that these terms were "inadmissible" and would commit the new state to "sectional interests."[17]

On June 16 Fal Conde came to Pamplona to meet Mola. They conferred all day at the Irache monastery near Estella, which had been the Carlist capital during the Third Carlist War of 1870-76. Mola, unyielding, gave Fal Conde his memorandum of June 5 stating his intention to maintain the republic and the separation of Church and state. Fal Conde reiterated the demands he had sent Zamanillo to make on June 11. The two stubborn men did not like each other, and clashed repeatedly. No progress was made.

On that same day, in Madrid, Gil Robles presented the latest statistics on revolutionary destruction since the February elections: 160 churches totally destroyed, 269 "mainly political" murders, and 1,287 assaults in the same category. "A country can live under a monarchy or a republic, with a parliamentary or a presidential system, under communism or fascism, but it cannot live in anarchy!" Gil Robles cried. "Now, alas, Spain is in anarchy."[18] During the next few days Miguel Maura, the Second Republic's first Minister of the Interior, spoke out after a long silence. Spain, he said, confronted nearly three million revolutionaries in the anarchist union CNT, and Largo Caballero's

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[16]Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain*, p. 244. The full text of the Carlist demands is printed in Redondo and Zavala, *El Requeté*, p. 355.

[17]Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain*, pp. 244-245.

[18]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed., p. 5.

militant Socialist union UGT—about one and a half million in each.[19] The Republic—which he had helped to create—had been transformed into a tool of the revolutionaries. Miguel Maura, a republican who was to support the government during the Civil War, spoke the simple, hard truth, which quotations already presented in this book have amply proved, but which many historians of the Spanish Civil War and its causes still refuse to face:

> Today the Republic is no more—though I would like to believe unconsciously—than the tool of the violent, revolutionary sector of the working classes which, shielded by the liberal democratic system and the blindness of certain leaders of the Republican parties, is preparing in minute detail an assault on the government and the extermination of capitalist and middle-class society. . . . They tell us this themselves in their newspapers and public meetings. . . . If the Republic is to be this, it is inexorably condemned to swift extinction at the hands of those who claim to be its defenders, or, which is more probable, at the hands of a reaction from the opposite direction.[20]

On June 23 Franco made a last appeal to the government by writing to Prime Minister Casares Quiroga warning him that recent events were imperilling "the discipline of the army"[21]—a rather transparent reference to the prospect of a military coup. Casares Quiroga did not reply.

The next day Mola signed his approval of the planned rising of the regular army in Morocco under Colonel Yagüe, to be signalled by a coded telegram which Mola would send at the appropriate moment. All his arrangements with the generals were made, but he held up the signal while he continued his negotiations with the Carlists. Though Mola did not like the Carlist political program, he had come to realize that without active Carlist support, at least in Navarra, there would be no rising there: the

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[19]*Ibid.*, p. 6n.
[20]Payne, *Franco Regime*, p. 95.
[21]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed., p. 199.

Asturian troops stationed there under his direct command were unreliable, since their province, which had revolted against the government of Lerroux and Gil Robles in 1934, had been deeply penetrated by the Left. Mola probably knew that the Carlists were also sufficiently well organized and prepared in many other parts of Spain to make their support exceedingly valuable. Indeed, only they could give the rising a genuinely popular character, make it more than a strictly military coup. On June 30 he met with three principal Navarrese Carlist leaders: the Count of Rodezno, Joaquín Baleztena, and José Martínez Berasáin. They seemed more flexible to him than Fal Conde, more eager to join the rising regardless of the nature of the new government it would install. But the Carlists were highly organized throughout Spain and had a strong military force in being—the Requeté—ready to put into the field. Mola needed the support of the whole Communion, and only Fal Conde could give it to him.

The stakes were very high. Military coups have been frequent in the history of Hispanic countries, and sometimes their governments last for many years, but none endure for very long, historically speaking. Military men can rescue a country and rule it through a time of crisis; a particularly gifted general like Franco may rule for a lifetime; but in the end the soldiers will return to their barracks, and civilians must be found to govern. Without clear new principles to guide it, civilian government would reflect at best merely the personal interests of its leaders, at worst a renewal of revolution. The new Catholic Spain which the Carlists sought could not be built by generals alone. The Carlists must have a major part in creating it, because in the end only they fully understood and could preserve it. Mola would not give them that role; Franco, wholly non-ideological as he was, never really understood the Carlists nor gave them power. But General Sanjurjo, son of a Requeté father slain in the Third Carlist War, might have done so. He was their hope, and to him they now turned.

July

After another meeting of Fal Conde and Mola July 7 produced no results whatsoever, Fal Conde sent Antonio Lizarza to Portugal to urge Sanjurjo to persuade Mola to make substantial concessions to the Carlists.

The critical negotiations of the next week have been much reviewed and discussed by historians, who have tended to dwell on the great difficulty Fal Conde and Prince Javier would have had in holding the Requeté back if the rising occurred without them, and therefore to state or imply that Mola could have simply assumed their support and did not really need to make any concessions to them. Also for this reason, the concessions which the Carlists did eventually obtain from Sanjurjo are dismissed as illusory or unimportant. Though there is some force in these arguments, they have been greatly overstated; for Mola could not afford to assume anything. His very life was at stake. If the rising failed and he was captured, he would be shot. He said later that he would have killed himself if the Carlists had not joined him. He very much wanted a free hand after the rising began, and was prepared to go a long way to get it—but not all the way, not to a total rejection of all the Carlists sought. They did have some bargaining leverage with him, as Fal Conde the lawyer well knew.

Carlism was an old cause which had been thought dead. It had been revived by an extraordinary combination of historical convergences and coincidences. The Carlists would almost certainly never have such an opportunity again; they must make the most of it. Their future depended on gaining strong influence in the new government of Spain that would be established by a successful rising. They must come into the rising as full partners, with a pledge from the military leadership to grant at least a sub-

stantial part of what meant most to them. For this they looked now to Sanjurjo.

On July 9 Sanjurjo wrote a letter for Lizarza to take back to Fal Conde and Mola, saying that the Carlists should be allowed to fly the red and gold flag of the monarchy from the beginning, while the regular army at the outset of the rising should fly no flag at all; that the provisional government after the rising should be "apolitical," including civilian as well as military members, and should dismantle the republic, "rectify" its religious and social legislation, abolish political parties, and establish "a genuinely new state" without the liberal parliamentary system. He made no mention of the ministry of education, propaganda and Church relations, or of the ministry of local government. Even so, the concessions were large—much of what Fal Conde had demanded. Lizarza was overjoyed, "firmly believing that Sanjurjo had given his backing to the Carlists."[1]

When Lizarza presented Sanjurjo's letter to Mola July 12, Mola questioned its authenticity. Later it was reported that it lacked a secret "countermark" which Sanjurjo placed on his genuine letters, and that Sanjurjo sent a separate emissary to Mola, unknown to Lizarza, "to explain that he had only signed the letter to keep the Carlists in the movement; he was not restricting Mola's freedom of action."[2] This report, contained in the Spanish government's official history of the Civil War but not attested elsewhere, is open to grave doubt, for it was very much in the interest of the Franco government after the Civil War to deny that any commitment had ever been made to the Carlists, who had no significant role in that government, especially since Sanjurjo and Mola—who might have set the record

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[1]Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge, England, 1975), pp. 247-249; Richard A. H. Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain; the Right, the Republic and Revolution, 1931-1936* (London, 1970), p. 285. For the text of Sanjurjo's letter see Luis Redondo and Juan de Zavala, *El Requeté; La Tradicion no muere*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona, 1957), pp. 362-363.

[2]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, pp. 286, 403-404.

straight—were by then both dead. On the face of it the letter is genuine, and Lizarza, who received it personally from Sanjurjo, always insisted that it was.

On that same day, apparently without yet knowing the contents of Sanjurjo's letter, Baleztena, Berasáin and two other Navarrese Carlist leaders went to St. Jean de Luz to confer with Javier, telling him that Mola had agreed to allow the Requeté to use the red and gold flag and the Carlists to administer Navarra after the rising. Javier said this was not good enough and he would have to contact Alfonso Carlos in Vienna before accepting these minor concessions as sufficient to justify full Carlist support of the rising. But when pressed, Javier agreed that if the rising occurred before Alfonso Carlos' reply arrived, he would commit the Requeté to it. The next day—Monday, July 13—Mola, upon receiving the news of the murder of Rightist leader Calvo Sotelo the preceding night, set the hour of the rising in Morocco at dawn (5:00 a.m.) Saturday, July 18, with the risings in Spain to come on the following day, Sunday the 19th.

On July 14 Mola wrote to Lizarza formally accepting the conditions stated by Sanjurjo in his letter of July 9, whose authenticity he had allegedly questioned. Martin Blinkhorn's statement that Mola "had nothing to lose" by doing so is not reasonable.[3] Any leader, even if sure of victory—and no one was sure of victory in Spain at that point—has "something to lose" by putting political pledges in writing: specifically, his freedom of action if he keeps his word, or if he does not keep his word, the difficulty he may later encounter in explaining why he did not keep it. It is more probable that Mola believed Sanjurjo wanted his agreement with the Carlists and, with the rising now imminent, decided to comply.

This letter from Mola satisfied Fal Conde and Prince Javier. The Carlist rising in Pamplona was set for Sunday, July 19, one

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[3]Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain*, p. 249. The text of Mola's letter of July 14 appears in Redondo and Zavala, *El Requeté*, p. 365.

day after the military rising, and the Prince and Fal Conde signed the order to mobilize the Requeté:

> The Traditionalist Communion with all its forces in the whole of Spain joins the military movement for the salvation of the fatherland, assuming that His Excellency the General Director [Mola] accepts a program of government along the general lines contained in the letter directed to him by His Excellency General Sanjurjo on the 9th of this month.[4]

The Requeté were ordered to recognize officers of the regular army as in overall command of the rising, but not to fight under any banner but the red and gold, to keep their own symbols and organization, and where possible to make a consecration to the Sacred Heart and to receive the sacraments in preparation for the crusade they were undertaking.

An indispensable element in Mola's plan for the rising in Morocco was to get Franco there, since he was confident (rightly, as it turned out) that nearly everyone in the army in Morocco would follow Franco if he were present in person. Franco was stationed in the Canary Islands. There was not nearly time enough for a sea voyage, nor had Franco a plausible excuse for making one. He had to come by air; and air transport in 1936 was still largely the preserve of adventurers and inventors. It was still considered unusual and rather daring to fly across the English Channel, though there was a commercial airline making such flights.[5] The overseas flight from the Canary Islands to Morocco was much longer—150 miles—and no commercial planes flew it.

The problem had been foreseen and a plan made to solve it. On July 5 the publisher of Madrid's monarchist newspaper *ABC* called the paper's correspondent in London, Luis Bolín, with in-

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[4]Redondo and Zavala, *El Requeté*, p. 365.

[5]My parents took it that fall, with me (aged four). We nearly froze when the heaters failed.

structions to charter a plane in England able to fly from the Canary Islands to Morocco. Cost, Bolín was told, was no object. (One of Spain's wealthiest men, Juan March, who had fled the country the day after the February 1936 election with much of his money, provided the funds.) The Spaniard Juan de la Cierva, inventor of the helicopter, was living in London. Bolín knew him well and called upon him immediately. La Cierva sent him to Croydon Airport near London the next day, where a small company called Olley Air Services had a twin-engined De Havilland plane to rent called the Rapid Dragon, which could carry up to seven people. La Cierva suggested he take along another man and two glamorous women to make the party look like tourists.

On July 8 they had lunch with Douglas Jerrold, editor of the Catholic periodical *English Review*. Bolín told Jerrold he needed a companion and two young and attractive women to accompany him on a mission to West Africa whose purpose he could not disclose, but which he was sure the sympathetic Jerrold strongly suspected. Jerrold suggested a retired major, Hugh Pollard, who was expert with firearms and "very much of your way of thinking."[6] Pollard was called and agreed to see them at his home. A true British adventurer of the old school, he accepted Bolín's unique proposition after only a few minutes of reflection, and offered his daughter Diana and her friend Dorothy Watson, 19 and 21 respectively, as the glamorous blondes. Diana was overjoyed, bubbling: "It's too wonderful for words! I can hardly believe it!"[7]

The next day, the 9th, Bolín paid Olley Air Services for the rental of the Rapid Dragon and was introduced to the pilot, Captain Cecil William Henry Bebb, young but very competent,[8] with

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[6]Luis Bolín, *Spain: the Vital Years* (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 17.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 20.

[8]During World War II Bebb was the personal pilot of Air Chief Marshal Arthur Barratt, commander-in-chief of the Royal Air Force in

red hair and freckles, blue eyes and an infectious grin. A mechanic and a radio operator were also engaged for the trip. At 7:15 in the morning, Saturday July 11, Bolín, Bebb, Pollard, Diana, Dorothy, the mechanic, and the radio operator took off from Croydon, none but Bolín knowing their mission.

Thus did the Rapid Dragon fly merrily into history, as its two beautiful feminine passengers flirted with its handsome young pilot under the indulgent eye of Major Pollard, while Luis Bolín's eyes kept slipping to his watch. As the tense drama of that cataclysmic week unfolds, the reader should always keep one ear open for the drone and rattle of the Rapid Dragon's twin engines as its primitive propellers beat through the air, guided always by Cecil Bebb's steady hand upon the stick.

After a sometimes harrowing ten-hour flight, during which the Rapid Dragon iced up over the Pyrenees and nearly ran out of gas over Portugal since they had only road maps to set their course, Bebb landed at a military airfield at Espinho near Porto at quarter past eight in the evening. Diana and Dorothy helped to charm the lieutenant in charge into not arresting their party and confiscating their plane for their unauthorized landing. That night they dined in style at a restaurant called Escondidinho ("the little hidden one") in Porto, and went on the next morning, Sunday the 12th, to Lisbon.

General Sanjurjo was staying with his family at a small hotel in that city, but when Bolín went to see him he found him not at home. Told he might be at the famous resort of Estoril sixteen miles away, Bolín got a car and sped out there, but still could not find the general. Returning to Lisbon, he amazingly encountered Sanjurjo in a car in a narrow street. Bolín told him he was going to bring Franco from the Canary Islands to Morocco. Sanjurjo assured him that his mission was supremely important, since only Franco could be counted on to rally the Moroccan army to the rising. Bolín now decided the time had come to let his Eng-

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France, and later chief test pilot of one of the companies in the British Hawker Group.

lish colleagues in on at least part of his tremendous secret. Their destination, he told Pollard, was the Canary Islands. If for any reason he was unable to go all the way there, the major, after landing at the airport on Grand Canary Island (the only one big enough to accommodate the Rapid Dragon) was to go by sea to the island of Tenerife and contact Dr. Gabarda in its town of Santa Cruz with the message "Galicia salutes France," which would mean "the airplane has arrived." He and Diana and Dorothy should then remain on the island for a few days and return to England by sea. To Bebb he said only that his destination was the Canaries and that he would have different passengers for the return journey, whom Pollard would present to him. Bebb responded: "Right-o!"[9]

Bolín and his passengers reboarded the Rapid Dragon and took off from Lisbon at quarter past four in the afternoon of a very hot day, determined to reach Africa before nightfall. (In those days, no one who could possibly avoid it flew planes by night.) Near sundown, at quarter of eight in the evening, Captain Bebb landed at Casablanca in French Morocco.

At 9:45 that night a Falangist hit squad shot and killed José Castillo, the Communist lieutenant in the Assault Guards who had shot the Falangists in the battle at the cemetery in Madrid on April 17. At two o'clock in the morning of Monday the 13th a reprisal team of assault guards led by Fernando Condés, a close friend of Castillo, after obtaining authorization from the government's Interior Minister to arrest some Falangists, went to the home of Antonio Goicoechea, a close parliamentary ally of the outspoken monarchist Calvo Sotelo, but found Goicoechea not at home. Then they went to the home of Gil Robles, but found him gone also. Then they decided to seize Calvo Sotelo himself.

Calvo Sotelo's life had been threatened twice on the floor of the Cortes by militant Socialists Nelken and Galarza on May 7

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[9]Bolín, *Spain: the Vital Years*, p. 29.

and July 1.[10] Early in July his police escort had been told by a police official named Aguirre Sánchez not to oppose any attempt to assassinate him. José Calvo Sotelo did not fear death; sometimes he seemed to invite it, to hope to become a martyr for Catholic Spain. At the great debate in the Cortes June 16 on the collapse of law and order in Spain, he had said:

> I recall the answer given by St. Dominic of Silos to a Spanish king: "Sire, my life you may take from me, but more you cannot take." Is it not, indeed, better to perish gloriously, than to live in contempt?[11]

Informed July 8 of the orders given by Aguirre Sánchez not to protect him from assassination, he remarked that perhaps his murder would inspire the organizers of the projected rising to put aside their differences and unite.

So, when the fatal knock came upon his door in Velázquez Street in Madrid at three o'clock in the morning and his night watchmen let Condés and his team of vengeful Assault Guards into the house on the display of Condés' identification papers, Calvo Sotelo calmly told his wife and daughter that he would let them take him to police headquarters. From there, he said, he would telephone them later, "unless these gentlemen are going to blow out my brains." One of them, Victoriano Cuenca, a young Galician socialist, did precisely that as their service truck reached the corner of Ayala and Velázquez Streets. Without stopping or even slowing down, they proceeded to the nearest cemetery. Captian Condés presented his papers again to the caretaker, who opened the cemetery gates. Calvo Sotelo's body was dumped inside, without identification. The truck drove

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[10]A widely disseminated report that Dolores Ibarruri, the spellbinding Communist speaker known as *La Pasionaria*, had told him a few days earlier in the Cortes "this is your last speech" appears to be no more than legend (Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. [New York, 1986], p. 207n).

[11]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 10.

away. Almost as soon as they left the cemetery the driver said. "Someone will surely denounce us." Condés replied: "Don't worry. Nothing will happen." José del Rey, a friend of Condés, said in confirmation: "Whoever whispers a word about this is a dead man. We'll kill him in the same way that we killed that swine."[12]

Nevertheless, they were arrested the following afternoon. But there was not nearly time left to bring them to trial before the war began.

Told of the murder, which galvanized almost every opponent of the government and the revolutionaries in Spain, Prime Minister Casares Quiroga could only say: "What a mess they've got us into!"[13]

The news reached Bolín in Casablanca that afternoon, and he instantly realized that he must now have Franco picked up and brought to Spanish Morocco with the greatest possible speed. But it was not clear where Franco could land. Spanish Morocco had only four airfields that could accommodate a plane the size of the Rapid Dragon: the international airport at Tangier and three military fields. Franco could not risk landing at any of them until he was sure of a friendly reception. Bolín decided that he had to remain in Casablanca to act as liaison between Spanish Morocco (his associate the Marqués of Mérito had gone to Tangier for that purpose) and the Rapid Dragon going to and returning from the Canary Islands. This would have the additional advantage that only Englishmen and women would now be aboard the Rapid Dragon, diverting any suspicion as to its real mission.

Meanwhile Bebb and the mechanic were checking out the Rapid Dragon's engines, and the radio operator had disappeared

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[12]Robert Payne, ed., *The Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (New York, 1962), pp. 17-19, from the text of the original police report on the murder of Calvo Sotelo.

[13]Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: an Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1979), p. 103n.

into the Casbah, where he was eventually found in an alcoholic stupor. The disgusted Pollard wanted nothing more to do with him. "Bebb will find the islands without that bastard's help," he told Bolín. "Why not pack him home? I'll see to everything; my consul will send him back on a tramp steamer and it won't cost you a penny."[14]

On Tuesday the 14th the funerals of both Calvo Sotelo and Lieutenant Castillo were held in Madrid. Castillo's coffin was draped in a red flag, befitting the Communist he had been. It was saluted with clenched fists by Communists, Socialists, and fellow Assault Guards. Calvo Sotelo was buried, as he had requested, in a Franciscan habit. His close associate Goicoechea declaimed:

> Before that flag placed like a cross on your chest, before God that hears and sees us, we make a solemn oath to put our lives to this triple work: to imitate your example, avenge your death, and save Spain, which is all one thing. To save Spain will be to avenge your death, and to imitate your example will be the sure way to save Spain.[15]

Gil Robles, less inspirational but more pithy, predicted that "Sotelo's blood will drown the government."[16] Immediately after Calvo Sotelo's funeral the Assault Guards in Madrid engaged in another gun battle with Falangists, which produced four dead and several wounded. Largo Caballero, who had been attending a meeting of the Socialist International in London, returned by train to Madrid that day. His adversary Prieto, who had so often warned against the coming disaster, was now reconciled to it. For all his relative moderation, he had no doubt which would be his side.

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[14]Bolín, *Spain: the Vital Years*, pp. 29-30.

[15]Joaquín Arraras, *Historia de la Segunda República Española*, Volume IV (Madrid, 1968), p. 366.

[16]Pierre Broué and Émile Témime, *The Revolution and Civil War in Spain* (Cambridge MA, 1970), p. 97.

> If reaction dreams of a bloodless *coup d'état* like that of 1923, it is entirely mistaken. If it supposes that it will find the regime defenseless, it is deluding itself. To conquer it will have to surmount the human barrier with which the proletarian masses bar its way. There will be—I have said it many times—a battle to the death, because each side knows that the adversary, if he wins, will give him no quarter. Even if this were the way it had to be, a decisive engagement would be better than this continuous blood-letting.[17]

About noon on Wednesday the 15th, after taking off from Casablanca at dawn, the Rapid Dragon landed at the exceedingly primitive airfield of Cabo Jubi in the Spanish Sahara, the closest point on the African continent to the Canary Islands. The garrison at this desert outpost was much impressed by the plane and by Diana and Dorothy. Numerous chickens were killed, plucked, and roasted for a banquet in their honor (in Spain it is usual to eat the main meal in the early afternoon) at which the English party had a little too much to drink. The Spanish commander at Cabo Jubi radioed the Ministry of War in Madrid to report the group's unauthorized arrival and destination; the staff there forwarded the message to General Franco as commandant of the Canary Islands directing him to detain them for questioning when they arrived there. But no one tried to detain them at Cabo Jubi, and by mid-afternoon they were flying over the 150 miles of ocean separating the Canary Islands from the African coast. In just over an hour they had landed at Gando airport near Las Palmas on the island of Grand Canary. Captain Bebb was successful in convincing the authorities there that their arrival without papers of any kind was a mere oversight by muddle-headed tourists.

That day the Cortes met in Madrid, under a standing order for deputies to check all firearms in the cloakroom. Most of the Right declared that this was the last session they would attend.

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[17]Robinson, *Origins of Franco's Spain*, p. 275.

Before walking out with almost all his CEDA deputies, Gil Robles presented his final statistics on disorder: since his previous speech of June 16 there had been 61 more killed, 224 more injured, 74 more bombings, ten more churches burned, and nine more priests attacked. War, he declared, was now inevitable:

> When citizens' lives are at the mercy of the first gunman, when the government is incapable of putting an end to this state of affairs, do not pretend that people believe in either legality or democracy; rest assured that they will turn more and more to paths of violence, and we who are not capable of preaching violence nor of profiting from it will gradually be displaced by others, bolder and more violent men who will come to harvest this deep national feeling.[18]

Now Franco had to get from Tenerife, where he had been living under the towering two-mile-high peak of Mount Teide, to Las Palmas on Grand Canary where the Rapid Dragon awaited him. At 7:30 in the morning of Thursday the 16th Pollard, Diana and Dorothy arrived at Tenerife, somewhat the worse for a rough passage. Pollard went immediately to Dr. Gabarda to give him the coded message. Since he knew hardly a word of Spanish, he had to spell it out. Suspicious of this peculiar procedure, the doctor cold-shouldered him. Pollard kept his aplomb. Fortunately Dr. Gabarda spoke English, and Pollard gave him the actual message in that language, that the aircraft had arrived. It was transmitted quickly; soon afterward a young officer in plain clothes came up to Pollard to say: "Can the plane fly direct to Spanish Morocco? Is the pilot quite reliable? When will he be ready to leave?"[19]

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[18]*Ibid.*, pp. 276 for the quote, 397-398 for the statistics. Gil Robles maintained this theme in his memoirs of the Civil War under the striking title *Peace Was Not Possible*.

[19]Bolin, *Spain: the Vital Years*, p. 38.

The day before, General Amadeo Balmes, military governor of Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, had shot and killed himself during target practice while trying to unblock a jammed pistol. His funeral was scheduled for Friday the 17th, giving Franco a good reason for leaving Tenerife to go to Las Palmas in order to attend it.[20] Just before midnight he took ship with his wife and daughter for the inter-island journey.

But conspiracies to overthrow governments rarely go exactly as planned. In the morning of the 17th, meeting in the map room at Melilla, Colonel Juan Segui, a Falangist and designated leader of the rising in eastern Morocco, briefed fellow Falangists on the plans and distributed arms to them. A traitor in the Falange betrayed the plan. Learning of the betrayal almost as soon as it took place, Colonel Segui went to the Spanish Foreign Legion. Its creator and flamboyant commander, José Millán Astray—who had lost a leg, an arm, and most of his teeth, and had made "Hail death!"[21] the Legion's battle cry and "*El Novio de la Muerte*" (he who is betrothed to death) their song—was in Argentina, but the men he had trained and inspired were ready for anything. They gave full support to Colonel Segui. With them behind him he arrested General Manuel Romerales, the commander of the army in eastern Morocco, who was loyal to the government and reputedly the fattest general in the army. He

[20]Dark hints that Balmes' curious accident was a murder by Franco or someone else involved in the planned military rising lack any proof whatsoever. As even his hostile biographer Paul Preston (*Franco* [New York, 1993], p. 139) admits, Franco was fully prepared to take the boat from Tenerife to Las Palmas without the permission from the government normally required for leaving the island where he was stationed. He was persuaded with some difficulty to ask for it on the argument that attending the funeral of Balmes provided a perfect justification.

[21]"*Viva la muerte!*" This is usually translated "Long live death," an absurd contradiction. But the familiar Spanish cry "*viva*" has a broader meaning than its literal translation.

was shot before nightfall—an act which the passions and fears of the moment may explain but cannot excuse. Segui immediately telegraphed Colonel Yagüe, designated second to Franco in the leadership of the rising in Morocco, at the city of Ceuta where he was stationed, to report what had happened. He sent a similar telegram to Franco in Las Palmas. By the end of the evening all of Spanish Morocco except the town of Larache had been secured before the government in Madrid found out what was going on. Larache resisted through the night, but fell to the rebel officers at dawn.

Arriving at Las Palmas on the 17th, Franco attended Balmes' funeral in the morning. During the afternoon he walked calmly through the town, and arranged for his wife and daughter to board a German ship to sail to safety. He ate dinner late, as is the Spanish custom. At four o'clock in the morning of Saturday, July 18, he was awakened to read his telegram from Morocco telling him that the rising had taken place ahead of time. He wasted not a moment. It does not appear that he had confided in many officers stationed in the Canary Islands about the rising; indeed, some authorities believe he had not made his final decision to join it until a few days before. But now he moved with cool and masterful decision, and most of the officers followed him. During the next two hours, while most of the people and the soldiers were asleep, he secured the islands, occupying their radio stations, power houses and reservoirs.[22] He proclaimed martial law, and sent telegrams to generals in Morocco and throughout Spain urging them to rally to his cause. Each message ended with the words "Blind faith in victory."[23] At 5:15 in the morning Canary Islands radio stations began broadcasting Franco's proclamation (drafted before his departure from Tener-

[22]There was scattered resistance on Grand Canary island when its residents woke up and found out what had happened, but it was soon put down and never had any chance of success.

[23]Brian Crozier, *Franco, a Biographical History* (Boston, 1967), p. 183.

(fn) stating his reasons for taking up arms against Spain's government:

> Spaniards! Whoever feels a holy love of Spain, whoever among the Army and the Navy has made profession of faith in the service of his country, whoever has sworn to defend her from her enemies, the nation calls you to her defense. With each day the situation in Spain becomes more critical; in most of her fields and villages anarchy reigns; the authority of the government is employed to foment revolution.[24]

His proclamation promised a new political order, described only in the most general terms. It was also notable for what it did not say. There was no reference to General Sanjurjo. And there was no reference to the peril of the Church nor the attacks made on her. The Spanish Civil War was not yet a crusade.

At two o'clock that afternoon a short, dark-complexioned man walked up to the Rapid Dragon and introduced himself to Captain Bebb with a firm handshake: "I am General Franco." He climbed into the plane with two companions and a radio operator (Major Pollard, Diana and Dorothy remained at Las Palmas). As they soared over the eastern Atlantic leading to the coast of Africa, Franco took off his uniform, changed into civilian dress so as not to be identified when they landed in French Morocco, and tossed the uniform into the sea. They refueled at Agadir. When at length they approached Casablanca a few minutes before nine o'clock, it was the last stage of twilight. Bolín was waiting at the airport. All police and customs officials had left for the night, assuming no planes would arrive in the dark. Someone turned on the landing lights; a fuse promptly blew and they went out. It was too dark to land without them. Captain Bebb had to make a second approach to the runway while a fortunately available electrician replaced the fuse. Immediately af-

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[24]Robert Payne, *Civil War in Spain*, pp. 19-20.

ter his landing they had a fast meal of ham sandwiches and beer at the airport, then went to a shabby hotel some distance from the city. Franco and Bolín shared a small room, where Franco talked until two in the morning, reviewing prospects for the rising. With remarkable foresight which proved absolutely correct, Franco said that most of the military officers and the country people of Spain would support his cause from the beginning, but most of the cities and the present rank and file of the army and navy probably would not. That would mean a long war, not a quick takeover. Could they win such a war? Bolín asked. Franco answered:

> In the last resort we would take to the hills, and from there carry on the kind of guerrilla warfare at which my men excel. The enemy could never beat us. But we shall not have to do that. We have ideals, faith and discipline; our opponents lack all this. It may take longer than most people think, but in the end we are certain to win.[25]

After just two hours' sleep, Franco and Bolín rejoined their party at the Casablanca airfield at dawn Sunday, July 19. For the first time they were asked for their passports. Franco had a diplomatic passport given to him by a friendly official in the Spanish Foreign Ministry, into which he had inserted his own photograph. No one checked the physical description, which did not fit Franco at all. Franco's aide Salgado had no passport, but got through by saying that Bolín had it. Once in the air, Franco donned another uniform. They landed at the Spanish Moroccan city of Tetuán, firmly held by the rebel officers, at 7:00 a.m. The historic flight of the Rapid Dragon was completed as General Franco took command of the army in Morocco against the government of Spain.

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[25]Bolín, *Spain: the Vital Years*, p. 48.

Meanwhile, the betrayal of the rising in Morocco by the Falangist spy had disarranged its whole program. From early in the morning of Saturday the 18th, the government was on the air declaring that no one had risen outside Morocco, and that the rebellion there would be swiftly put down. (The appearance of calm control of the situation given by these radio broadcasts was very far from the truth. Prime Minister Casares Quiroga was in a state of near-panic, shouting and screaming. At one moment he blurted, in what could have been either a pathetic attempt at humor or a touch of madness: "They're rising? Very well, I shall go and lie down!")[26] Wherever anyone was listening to the radio, the element of surprise was lost. This caused many of the generals who had conspired with Mola to hesitate.

One who did not hesitate was Queipo de Llano in Sevilla. He was assigned to lead its rising, but had only arrived in the city the day before, and had just four officers with him. But he moved at once, before most of the military men in the city had heard of the rising in Morocco or had time to grasp its significance. In an astonishing demonstration of bluff and bravado, he prevailed. His proceedings would be incredible if they were not well documented. First he set up his headquarters in a block of offices in a building abandoned because of Sevilla's fierce summer heat. Then he walked unannounced into the office of General Fernández Villa Abrille, commander of the army in Andalusia. "I have to tell you," Queipo informed the astounded general, "that the time has come to take a decision: either you are with me and my other comrades, or you are with this government which is leading Spain to ruin." When Villa Abrille did not respond, Queipo declared him and his staff under arrest. Since he had no place to put anybody under arrest, he simply sent them into the next room, which had no lock, turned to a corporal standing nearby, and ordered him to shoot anyone who came out of the room. The abashed corporal obeyed, and the equally

[26]Antony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1982), p. 53.

abashed officers stayed inside. Then Queipo went to the infantry barracks, where he found that the colonel commanding had drawn up his men in military formation on the plaza. "I shake your hand, my dear colonel," Queipo exclaimed, "and I congratulate you on your decision to put yourself on the side of your brothers-in-arms in these hours when the fate of our country is being decided!" When the colonel mumbled that he had done no such thing, Queipo declared him relieved of his command and asked for volunteers to replace him. A young captain raised his hand. Queipo then told the other officers: "You are my prisoners." Like the first group, they accepted that status without protest.[27]

At about this point 25 Carlists, 15 Falangists and a few Civil Guardsmen appeared to support the rebel general. Later in the day Queipo won over the commander of the artillery in Sevilla. He brought his guns into Plaza San Fernando and opened fire on the building housing the civil government, which promptly surrendered. Hearing garbled but alarming reports of these events, the workers of the city began building barricades. But that evening Queipo went on the radio. He proved a master of radio propaganda, convincing his listeners that he was fully in charge and would deal mercilessly with anyone who resisted him, and this soon became the fact.

Gonzalo Queipo de Llano has much to answer for over the next six months, as military governor for the Nationalists in the south. He was no crusader, hardly a Catholic—in 1931 he had approved the burning of churches and convents. But if other local leaders of the rising had displayed half his bold panache, hundreds of thousands of Spanish lives might have been saved.

With the rising successful in Morocco and Sevilla, it would be feasible to bring the veteran soldiers in Morocco into action in Spain provided they could cross the Straits of Gibraltar without

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[27]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), pp. 221-222 for all the quotations.

interference. Both sides recognized the vital importance of control of the Straits. As soon as Franco's proclamation was broadcast, Navy Minister José Giral ordered three destroyers based on Cartagena to block the Straits and bombard the port of Melilla in Morocco, from which troops could embark. The officers of the destroyers announced that they supported the rising. Giral radioed orders dismissing all officers who refused to obey government orders. A young radio officer named Benjamin Balboa seized control of the main naval radio transmitter on the southern coast and used it to rebroadcast these orders repeatedly throughout the day. The crews of the destroyers *Sánchez Barcaiztegui* and *Almirante Valdés* consequently mutinied against their officers. But on the third destroyer, *Churruca*, the radio was out of order. So the crew heard nothing, and their officers were able to sail the ship across the Straits and pick up the first load of soldiers from the Moroccan army. They were landed at Cádiz at dawn and helped Carlist General Varela secure that port city for the rising.

But in the two principal cities of Spain, Madrid and Barcelona, no officer had yet moved. Pressed by his staff, General Francisco Llano de la Encomienda in Barcelona told them that, if forced to choose, he preferred communism to "fascism."

Across the French border in the Pyrenean village of St. Jean de Luz that day, Fal Conde gave Joaquin and Dolores Baleztena, members of "the first Carlist family in Navarra,"[28] Prince Javier's instructions for the Requeté to join the rising. They crossed the border and returned to Pamplona, Dolores carrying the written orders in her sandals. In the streets of Pamplona she heard the young men wearing red berets singing:

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[28]So they were always described to me by my old friend Dr. Frederick Wilhelmsen, for many years an active Carlist though an American.

"Las fiestas están alegres,
"Y las chicas guapas son,
"Mas yo me voy pues me llamo
"Alfonso Carlos Borbón."

"The holidays are joyful,
"And the girls are pretty,
"But I must go, for I am called
"By Alfonso Carlos Borbón."[29]

That evening word went out that every soldier of the Requeté of Navarra who could reach the main square of Pamplona the next morning should be there with arms in their hands, ready for war. All during the night they streamed in, from hill and valley, with exultation on their faces. The crusading hour had struck.

That same evening, at the national shrine at the Mountain of the Angels at the exact center of Spain, graced by a great statue of the Sacred Heart, some thirty members of the Companies of St. Joseph and of the Sacred Heart were engaged in nocturnal adoration of Christ in the tabernacle, praying for the salvation of their country and its faith. Knowing that the shrine and the statue would be in grave danger if war should break out, they decided to post a permanent guard of five men on the mountain.

It was a quiet night at the Mountain of the Angels, but Hell was in Madrid. At three o'clock in the morning of Sunday the 19th the shattered Casares Quiroga resigned as Prime Minister. Despite his disintegration, he had resisted to the end demands from the militant Socialists and anarchists to distribute arms to the people—like every well-informed man in Spain, he knew what that would mean. But mobs were already breaking into the arsenals; churches, monasteries, convents, and secular buildings thought to be especially symbolic of the "class enemy" were being set afire. James Cleugh describes the nightmare scene:

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[29]Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 104.

> Before the dawn of that black Sunday, the 19th of July, leaping flames and rolling clouds of smoke alternately revealed and obscured the commandeering of vehicles, the looting of shops and restaurants, and scenes of even more violent and tragic vengeance on all who resisted, and many who simply stood appalled at all this outrage and disorder. All that night the armed rioters massacred their opponents, including many priests and monks, in the glare of the burning buildings. The crash of falling masonry, the incessant reports of firearms, the thunderous passage of armored cars and other heavy vehicles tearing through the packed streets, the shrieks of the victims, and the ferocious cheering of their executioners turned the capital of Spain into an inferno.[30]

Long afterward, in his memoirs, the huge, bull-necked Communist combat commander who called himself *El Campesino* ("the peasant")—one of the few of his kind to survive the Spanish Civil War—said he still could not imagine how one day could have held so much bloodshed and battle as July 19, 1936.

At four o'clock in the morning of that day, troops under Major José López Amor marched out from the Pedralbes barracks toward the center of Barcelona. A generous ration of brandy had been served to them on empty stomachs. Some were told their mission was to crush an anarchist revolt, others that they were only going to march around the city in honor of the "People's Olympiad," arranged by critics of the regular Olympic Games then being conducted under Hitler's eye in Berlin. They reached the Plaza de Cataluña in the center of the city and took possession of the telephone building there, but got no further. Other columns which were intended to join them did not even reach the center of town. General Manuel Goded, who had asked to lead the rising in Barcelona and been approved in that assignment by Mola, had not yet arrived from the Balearic Is

[30]James Cleugh, *Spanish Fury: the Story of a Civil War* (London, 1962), p. 56.

lands where he was stationed; the rising was beginning without a leader.

Barcelona had long been the principal center of Spanish radicalism: it had militant left-wing organizations of every stripe, from Largo Caballero Socialists through Trotskyite Communists and Stalinist Communists to moderate anarchists who believed they could cooperate temporarily with some government to radical anarchists who believed they could cooperate with none. These groups mostly hated each other, but they hated conservative and Catholic Spain more. All turned out in the streets to fight. Increasing numbers of the soldiers and the Civil Guard joined them. General Goded arrived in the late morning to find the situation out of control, the Plaza de Cataluña covered with dead men and dead horses, fires blazing and bullets sweeping the streets. As evening came, his headquarters was stormed and he was captured. He made a radio broadcast, which the government rebroadcast all over Spain, calling on his officers and men to lay down their arms.

"Fate has been against me," he said.[31] General Goded had not learned that crusaders do not believe in fate. He was shot on August 12.

At the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Barcelona that day, armed men of the Left entered the building, dug up the body of a woman from its grave under the church, and placed it at the entrance in full public view.

By dawn Azaña had asked his old associate Diego Martinez Barrio, head of the Republican Union party, to form a government to succeed Casares Quiroga's. It had no support from those now actually dominating the country. Largo Caballero declared he would prevent such a government from taking power by force of arms, if need be. In an absurd, desperate attempt at compromise, Martinez Barrio telephoned General Mola in Pamplona to offer him a post in his new government. The house where Mola

[31]Broué and Témime, *Revolution and Civil War in Spain*, p. 112.

was living overlooked the Plaza del Castillo, the central square of Pamplona. It was six o'clock in the morning, and the crusade was forming up outside his window. Six thousand Requetés filled the square, with more arriving every minute, singing Carlist songs[32] and Catholic hymns, going to confession, receiving Holy Communion. Dolores Baleztena remembers "shouts of joy, happy faces; the people sweeping in off the land; lorries, tractors, farm carts bringing red berets from every side street into the square; most of the people in their Sunday best; a man in shirt-sleeves leaped from a lorry crying, 'here we come, confessed and communed, for whatever God demands.'"[33] So General Mola told Martínez Barrio, Prime Minister of Spain for just one day:

> What you propose is now impossible. Pamplona is full of Carlists. From my balcony I can only see red berets. Everyone is ready for the battle. If I tell these men now that I have made an arrangement with you, the first head to roll would be mine.[34]

Mola had the people's army he needed, comprised not of unwilling conscripts, but of crusaders. Nothing like this had been seen in Europe since the rising in the Vendée in France against the French Revolution. Many of the Requetés, like the Catholic and Royal Army of the Vendée, wore Sacred Heart badges on their shoulders or over their hearts. In that square that morning, mothers hung crucifixes around the necks of their sons. Some villages of Navarra were virtually depopulated of men: Artajona sent 775 out of its 800 men to the crusade. Records

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[32]A typical song ran: "Do not weep, mother, do not weep/Because your sons go to war, go to war/What matters that the body dies/If in the end the soul rejoices in eternity, in eternity/Volunteers, to arms, to arms/to struggle for our faith!" (Redondo and Zavala, *El Requeté*, p. 419)

[33]Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, pp. 64-65.

[34]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 229.

show as many as eight members of the same family enlisted. Sometimes three generations fought together. A famous story from the war tells of the requeté who was asked who should be told if he were killed in action. "'José Maria de Hernandorena, of the *tercio* of Montejurra, aged 65. He's my father.' And if he should be killed too? 'Then tell José Maria de Hernandorena, of the *tercio* of Montejurra, aged 15. He's my son.'"[35] To quote the reminiscences of one young requeté who enlisted in Navarra this day, Juan Urra Lusarreta, to whose adventures during the rest of this epochal year we will periodically return:

> I never knew so thrilling a joy as seized us. We did not know if we would soon be martyrs or victors. We knew surely that by this we would act above all for God, and that the hour had arrived to show with deeds what we had sworn in the face of the ruin of our country and the many profanations the revolution had inflicted continuously upon the Church. We remembered that it had been said from the pulpit, on the day of the February elections: "They will not profane these churches without our having defended them to the death." Now, at this moment, the time had come to prove that. With what exultation did we leap upon the highways! We kept joking with one another, in the warmth of the gladness that invaded us.[36]

The whole of Navarra was secured for the rising this day, and by four days later, the 23rd, there were 20,000 Navarrese requetés in service.[37] General Mola was able to begin sending them out immediately to assist the rising in other areas. Five hundred went to help take Logroño to the east; it submitted with almost no resistance, somewhat to the disappointment of the eager young requetés, who now shouted out their desire to march

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[35]Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain*, p. 259.

[36]Juan Urra Lusarreta, *En las trincheras del frente de Madrid: Memorias de un capellán de requetés, herido de guerra* (Madrid, 1967), p. 18.

[37]Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain*, p. 254.

immediately to Madrid. Twelve hundred requetés (called the *Tercio* of Maria de las Nieves, named for the wife of Alfonso Carlos) went to Zaragoza to help General Miguel Cabanellas gain and hold that city despite its substantial number of anarchists. A still larger number was sent to the small but populous and industrialized Basque provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, whose people were predisposed by strong Basque separatist sentiment to oppose military rule despite being mostly good Catholics. (The third Basque province, Alava, had been secured by three thousand requetés on July 19.) In Burgos, capital of Old Castile, requetés gathered on the night of July 18-19 under pictures of the Carlist kings, in the presence of an 80-year-old veteran of the Third Carlist War who had assembled with the Requeté in Burgos in 1872. They prayed the rosary together, and marched out the next morning to help Colonel Marcelino Gavilán take the city with virtually no resistance. Burgos, the ancient capital of Castile, was soon to become the capital of Nationalist Spain.

Given the tremendous news far away in Vienna, old Alfonso Carlos gave written confirmation of all the actions which Prince Javier and Fal Conde had taken in his name. Patrolling the streets of Logroño July 21, the requetés of the little town of Mendigorria sang a crusader's song:

> Always Navarra has been a faithful defender
> Of Jesus Christ our King.
> For Him now we go, Navarros,
> To defend His holy Law, His holy law.
>
> For Christ the King, our Redeemer,
> The boys of Navarra, brave champions,
> Until victory or death,
> Swear to fight the good fight.[38]

[38]Urra Lusarreta, *En las trincheras*, p. 38.

In the mountainous province of Asturias, where a leftist revolution against a conservative republican government had occurred in 1934, two heroic officers took their stand on July 19 at immense risk. Colonel Antonio Aranda, military commander at Oviedo, the capital of Asturias, pretended to uphold the Republic just long enough to send armed revolutionary mine workers marching away from the city, then called upon his soldiers and the people to "put an end, once and for all, to this era of innumerable crimes perpetrated under cover of a love for democracy and the Republic."[19] Colonel Antonio Pinilla, commanding the Simancas barracks at the Asturian port city of Gijón, kept the loyalty of almost all his 350 men, rank and file as well as officers, as he assembled them at the barracks surrounded by armed, shouting and blaspheming revolutionaries. Totally isolated, he and his men were to hold those barracks against enormous odds for almost a full month.

In the south of Spain on that bloody day the rising gained Córdoba inland, north of Sevilla, but lost the port of Málaga. The destroyer *Churruca* in the Straits of Gibraltar, whose officers had supported the rising, was seized by its crew, as were the battleship *Jaime I* and the cruisers *Libertad* and *Miguel de Cervantes*, sent by the government to augment the blockade of the Straits. Every officer on the *Cervantes* was killed by the sailors. Though the mutineers made poor ship handlers and navigators, Franco dared not risk his Moroccan veterans on narrow seas with six now hostile ships in the offing. Once again he must look to the air.

But Spain had relatively few aircraft, and fewer still in Morocco or any of the areas controlled by the rising. At this moment Franco controlled a grand total of five. With the aid of General Alfredo Kindelán, the monarchist founder of the Spanish air force who was an active supporter of the rising, Franco put them immediately into service airlifting troops from Mo-

[19]Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 238.

rocco. But even with each aircraft making four trips a day, he could only bring about 400 soldiers per day across the Straits of Gibraltar. He had to get help from outside to transport the greater part of the Army of Africa by air. France, like Spain, had a Popular Front government—if not quite so revolutionary—headed by Léon Blum. It would certainly not help the Spanish officers' rising and might well help the government in Madrid. The English government of cautious Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who distrusted all foreigners, would certainly not help him, nor would the United States, still strongly isolationist. Of the advanced industrial nations possessing significant numbers of aircraft, only Germany and Italy, ruled by Hitler and Mussolini respectively, might help. Unavoidable necessity required Franco to turn to them. He never liked or trusted either man. But Franco could not disdain help from any nation because of the evil of its leaders. Americans who sanctimoniously condemn him for not doing so forget how eagerly the United States during World War II courted, for help against Japan as well as Germany, the hideous Soviet Communist regime of Stalin, who casually told President Franklin Roosevelt at Yalta how he had "liquidated" ten million "kulaks."

In the first day of the airlift across the Straits of Gibraltar, July 19, just 35 men of the Spanish Foreign Legion were flown across to Algeciras, hard by the Rock of Gibraltar. In the manner of Queipo de Llano, they multiplied themselves by hundredsfold, commandeering motor vehicles and rushing about the city proclaiming the triumph of the new regime. Rumor magnified their handful into an army, and Algeciras was firmly controlled by nightfall.

The titanic events of July 19 had thoroughly discredited Martínez Barrio's day-old government, while the revolutionaries in the streets demanded with increasing ferocity that he give them arms. This, at least, Martínez Barrio firmly refused to do. (Once all the revolutionaries were armed, no government of the Republic could possibly stand against them even if it wished to

do so.) Shortly after midnight on the 20th the flailing Azaña—now President of Spain in name only—decided to replace Martinez Barrio with José Giral, the Navy Minister who by his quick response and effective use of the radio had prevented most of Spain's warships from joining the rising. Few ministerial changes were made; but hardly anyone cared about the composition of a cabinet amid the erupting chaos. The only important decision Giral made as Prime Minister was his first: at dawn of the 20th he approved distribution of arms to the people throughout Republican Spain. In Madrid, trucks were loaded at the arsenals with 65,000 rifles and driven to the headquarters of Largo Caballero's militant Socialist labor union UGT and the anarchist union CNT. But then it was discovered that most of the rifles (60,000 of the 65,000) were not equipped with the bolts necessary to fire them. These were held at the Montaña barracks, commanded by officers who supported the rising.

Madrid represented the greatest failure in Mola's planning for the military coup. He had given the responsibility of organizing it there to a trusted associate, Colonel Valentin Galarza. Galarza had obtained the consent of General Rafael Villegas to act as its leader in Madrid, but when Galarza was arrested several days before it was scheduled to occur, Villegas backed out. He was belatedly replaced by General Joaquin Fanjul, one of the original conspirators, who had been Under-Secretary of War in the Lerroux government. Fanjul did not even reach the Montaña barracks until the afternoon of the 19th, whereupon he presented the case for the rising to the officers. Most of them joined him. But when they attempted to lead their men out of the barracks, they found themselves surrounded by a huge and hostile crowd, many of whom were already armed with weapons collected earlier by the revolutionary unions. With sporadic firing by both sides, the officers and their troops remained in the barracks.

The next morning an even larger crowd surrounded the barracks, including most of those carrying the five thousand rifles

issued by the government which did have bolts. The revolutionaries had acquired three cannon and bombarded the barracks with them; some aircraft flew from nearby Getafe air base to bomb it. Fanjul signalled for help to other barracks, but they were similarly beset. In mid-morning Fanjul and the commandant of the Montaña barracks, Colonel Francisco Serra, were wounded. There was confusion of command. Someone waved a white flag from a window in the barracks, while others fired machine guns into the crowd, infuriating it still more. By no means all the troops in the barracks wanted to fight. Just before noon the attackers broke down the barricaded doors of the barracks. A brutal massacre followed. One giant-sized revolutionary flung one officer after another from the top floor to their death on the stone-flagged courtyard below. Wounded Colonel Serra was shot in his bed. The store of rifle bolts was found, the other barracks were quickly taken, and Madrid belonged to the revolution. Executions of officers who survived the massacre began that evening.[40] The victorious killers marched through the Puerta del Sol in the heart of Madrid carrying pictures of Lenin and Largo Caballero.

Three days later the Giral government in Madrid in effect recognized their authority by establishing "people's courts," consisting of three judges, a president, a prosecuting attorney, and 14 jurymen appointed by "the political and trade-union organizations."[41]

In Barcelona, where the rising had already failed in the city, anarchists led by Francisco Ascaso and Buenaventura Durruti stormed its last bastion, the Ataranzas barracks, in the early afternoon of the 20th, after a hard-fought battle which left 500 dead and 3,000 wounded.[42] Stained with blood, dripping with sweat, sitting with their rifles between their knees, Durruti and two companions met with Luis Companys, who claimed to be

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[40]Fanjul was executed a month later, on August 18.
[41]Broué and Témime, *Revolution and Civil War in Spain*, p. 217.
[42]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 248.

president of Catalonia. Companys cared little for law and less for faith, but he was not an ultimate revolutionary or a mindless killer; later he was to save the life of the Cardinal Archbishop of Tarragona from the anarchists, and even to try to save the life of General Goded. But he knew who ruled Catalonia now. He told Durruti:

> You have won and everything is in your power. If you do not need me, if you do not want me as president, say so now, and I shall become just another soldier in the anti-fascist struggle. If, on the other hand, you believe me when I say that I shall yield this post to victorious fascism only when I am dead, then perhaps with my party comrades, my name, and my prestige, I can be of use to you.43

The anarchists allowed Companys to retain his title, but set up an Anti-Fascist Militias Committee which immediately became the only real government in Catalonia. Committee member Jaime Maravitlles of the less revolutionary Esquerra party recalled how the anarchists "came to the meetings wearing bandoliers stuffed full of cartridges and laid their pistols or submachine-guns out in front of them. Thumping the table, they'd shout: 'This is how things are going to be done now! You're a lot of petty bourgeois, trying to hold back the revolution!'" When Companys approached the Committee to protest the indiscriminate killing of monks and nuns and their relatives, Durruti said: "Tell Companys not to come here again. If he does, I'll fill him full of bullets."44

In the morning of the 21st three Jesuit priests and a brother were arrested at a Jesuit retreat house in the Bonanova district of Barcelona after a search of their house for arms had found none. They were brought to anarchist headquarters, where the crowd shouted, "We are going to kill you because you are priests; not

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43Broué and Témime, *Revolution and Civil War in Spain*, p. 130.
44Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, pp. 143-144.

one of you will be left!"[45] Taken to a hill outside the city, the martyrs declared that they died for Christ and forgave their killers, giving each other absolution. All were shot, but one survived to tell the tale, with a bloody head wound that made him appear dead. On the night of the 23rd twelve nuns were shot in Barcelona beside a highway, four of them over sixty; one lay in agony for four hours before dying. That day Jaime Busquets Xaubet, lay organist of the parish of San José de Gracia, practicing at the organ in the church, saw a mob coming, refused to flee, and pleaded with them not to burn the church. He was seized and shot a few hours later.[46]

Elsewhere in Catalonia, Bishop Silvio Huix of Lérida was captured by a mob and imprisoned on the 21st; Cardinal Archbishop Francesc Vidal y Barraquer of Tarragona and his auxiliary, Bishop Manuel Borrás, were arrested by militia on the 23rd as they tried to escape. In the cathedral city of Vich, truckloads of men from outside the city arrived on the 21st and announced in the plaza: "In two hours Vich will be burning from end to end."[47] They began immediately to bomb and burn all the churches, profane the tombs of saints (including Anthony Claret) and famous men (including Catholic writer and political theorist Jaime Balmes), set fire to the diocesan museum destroying the famous paintings of José Maria Sert, and collected an enormous pile of religious books and articles which they burned in the main square.

Only Bishop Manuel Irurita of Barcelona found refuge. A heroic jeweler named Antonio Tort hid him in a room in back of

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[45]José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), p. 13.

[46]Most of the martyrdoms described here and later in this book were carefully investigated and fully verified by Antonio Montero Moreno in his monumental *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España. 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961).

[47]Luis Carreras, *The Glory of Martyred Spain: Notes on the Religious Persecution* (London, 1939), p. 29.

his shop, successfully concealing him there for the next five months.

In the center of Spain, on the Mountain of the Angels, the five young men who had volunteered on the night of July 18-19 to guard the shrine maintained their vigil while Assault Guards took away the nuns who lived in the adjoining Carmelite convent, and stayed even when anarchist militia took over from the Assault Guards on the 22nd, though then they tried to hide. The next day the anarchists found them, conducted a few minutes' parody of a trial, and shot them.

Madrid stands relatively close to the center of Spain, north of the Mountain of the Angels. It lies on a broad plain, with the ancient capital of Toledo only forty miles away to the southwest. North of Madrid rise the mile-high Guadarrama Mountains, dividing Old Castile from New Castile. The revolutionaries had gained control of almost all the plain of New Castile; the Nationalists (as we may now begin to call them, for they were about to make their first attempt at government under that name) controlled Old Castile from Burgos. It was strategically vital to hold the Guadarrama passes, and neither side lost any time in trying to do so.

On the very day of the storming of the Montaña barracks in Madrid, July 20, a column of troops and Civil Guards supporting the Republic marched from Alcalá de Henares toward Somosierra Pass in the Guadarramas, while another column of troops, Civil and Assault Guards, and militia headed for Navacerrada Pass on the road to Segovia. The next day a third column composed of two battalions of infantry, two companies each of Civil and Assault Guards, a machine gun battalion, and six *baterías* of artillery, commanded by Colonel Enrique Castillo, set out for Lion's Peak Pass on the road to Galicia. Another infantry battalion ordered to march with this column refused, saying the new government had absolved them from the duty of obeying their officers. Moscow-trained Communist Enrique Lister, who had studied at the Frunze military academy in the Soviet Union, and

Dolores Ibarruri ("*La Pasionaria*") hurried to tell this battalion how mistaken they were; they must fight! They marched with Castillo's column after all, with Lister now their "political advisor." That midnight a column of Nationalist soldiers commanded by Colonel Serrador of the Requeté set out for Lion's Peak Pass from Valladolid in Old Castile "amid scenes of wild enthusiasm."[48]

With their head start, the Republican forces reached the passes first. They secured Somosierra Pass against the desperate resistance of the handful of requetés and Falangists present there, while Castillo's large column found Lion's Peak Pass undefended. The overconfident Castillo returned immediately to Madrid. When Requeté Colonel Serrador's column arrived at Lion's Peak Pass on the 22nd they attacked at once, still full of enthusiasm. The surprised and leaderless Republican force panicked and fled. Later in the day Castillo was shot by a militiaman who evidently disapproved of his conduct of the operation.

On the 23rd another Nationalist column under Colonel Gistau tried to storm Somosierra Pass, but was driven back by artillery just brought up by the Republicans, which inflicted heavy casualties on his men. That evening Colonel García Escámez with the Mountain Brigade from Navarra and four companies of requetés arrived to reinforce Gistau, while strong Republican reinforcements, including the all-Communist Thaelmann battalion, arrived at Lion's Peak Pass under Castillo's replacement, Colonel Morales Carrasco. Carrasco attacked the next day, but the disunity and indiscipline which had killed his predecessor was still rife; many of his men refused to obey his orders, and Serrador's Nationalists easily repelled the disorganized assault. On the 25th, the feast of Spain's national patron St. James the Apostle (Santiago), García Escámez called for an assault by the requeté *tercio* named for this saint. In an over-

[48]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 315.

whelming charge the red-bereted Carlist crusaders prevailed, and took Somosierra Pass.[49]

But their prospective champion, General Sanjurjo, was dead. A large two-engined plane had originally been designated to pick him up in Portugal (at one point it was even suggested to use the Rapid Dragon for this purpose); but the Portuguese, guarding their neutrality, did not wish the famous Spanish general, expected to become the military leader of the Nationalists, to take off from any of their regular airfields. A young pilot named Juan Antonio Ansaldo was therefore sent in a two-seater aircraft called a Puss-Moth to pick him up at an abandoned racetrack at La Marinha near Lisbon on July 20.

Ansaldo began his takeoff run on the bumpy field. As his wheels left the ground, the lone engine began to knock alarmingly. The whole aircraft shuddered, and failed to gain altitude. Ansaldo, an experienced pilot, knew he must land immediately. Over a five-foot stone wall just beyond the racetrack was a flat, cultivated field, suitable for the forced landing. Ansaldo gave the laboring engine full throttle. The plane seemed to rise.

Ansaldo's aircraft failed to clear that stone wall by no more than a few inches. The undercarriage caught on it, and the plane crashed. The young pilot lost consciousness, but recovered in moments. Sixty-four-year-old General Sanjurjo sat motionless. The plane caught fire. Ansaldo screamed to Sanjurjo to get out while there was still time. There was no response.

The commander-to-be of the great rising, the man who had promised the Carlists much of what they had asked of him, who had given his "respect and adherence" to their king, who had proudly recalled the Carlist loyalties of his father and his uncle, who had seen his son dressed in the uniform of a requeté, was gone. He might have made all the difference, might have made it possible for the Carlists to bring their dream to reality, to pre-

[49]For the rarely described history of the struggle for the Guadarrama passes, see George Hills, *The Battle for Madrid* (New York, 1976), pp. 47-48, 53-54.

serve and extend what Franco had won instead of losing much of it at his death 39 years later—or not. We shall never know.

Six inches of lift on a wavering wing before a stone wall in Portugal: of such may the turning points of history be made.

Meanwhile in hallowed Toledo, in the middle of the New Castilian plain which the revolutionaries ruled, the greatest epic of the war was beginning to unfold, a story of heroism with few parallels in the history of Spain or of the world. Crowning the highest point of the gigantic rock upon which the ancient city was built stood what had once been its citadel, or castle (*alcázar* in Spanish). Shortly after it was liberated from the Moors, El Cid had governed the city from it. The great king and emperor Charles V had built a palace there in the sixteenth century. For more than fifty years it had been a military academy, rebuilt after a fire in 1887 with an exceptionally strong framework of steel girders and walls up to twelve feet thick. A square tower topped by a spire stood at each corner. The walls enclosed a courtyard with a bronze statue of Charles V at its center. On the south side of the courtyard an immense stairway, with steps fifty feet wide, led up to the second story. Adjoining the Alcázar on the east was a parade ground, with a field house called the Picadero which was used as a riding academy on a level below it, and the Santiago barracks for troops permanently assigned to the Academy just beyond, overlooking the narrow gorge of the Tagus River a hundred feet below. The cadets' quarters were under the southeast tower, and below the entire structure were extensive cellars. At the foot of the hill, adjoining the Alcázar itself, stood the Gobierno, the government building, housing the offices of the military governor of the department of Toledo and his staff, with the numerous riding horses used by the academy kept in stables in the basement. From the Gobierno a steep winding road called the Zig Zag led up to the north terrace of the Alcázar, closed off by an iron gate. Facing the Gobierno was a narrow street which led into the Plaza de Zocodover, the principal square of Toledo.

Because it was summer vacation, no cadets were at the Academy that July. The Academy commandant, Colonel José Moscardó, was tall for a Spaniard—six feet—and sixty years old, bald, rather awkward in his movements, passionately loyal to Church and country. He had graduated from the Academy forty years before and was approaching the end of an honorable but undistinguished career. None of the planners of the military coup had thought it worthwhile to include him. When on the morning of July 18 he heard the radio reports of the rising in Morocco, carefully tailored by the government to make it appear already doomed, he did not know what to think. Since Madrid was only forty miles away, he decided to drive there to consult with some of the officers stationed there whom he trusted. Some of them knew what was planned, and told him. He committed himself instantly to their cause. He had once met Franco and admired him immensely. There was an arms factory in Toledo which would be of great value to whichever side had possession of it. Moscardó hurried back to Toledo to be in a position to take it for the rising, or at least prevent the government of the Republic from using it.

That evening he assembled a large group of officers, of whom he was the ranking member, and gained their support for the rising. But Colonel Romero, chief of the Civil Guard in Toledo department, persuaded him to delay a public announcement until he could bring a substantial force of Civil Guards and a large supply of ammunition from the arms factory into the Alcázar. The need for such precautions was underlined by a clash between armed workers and Civil Guardsmen at ten o'clock that night in the Plaza de Zocodover. Already civilians seeking protection from revolutionary violence were coming into the Alcázar.

Early the next morning, the terrible Sunday the 19th, Mass was said in the Alcázar chapel:

> The doll-featured Madonna, cast from plaster, looked down from the altar. An overflow crowd spilled out on the stairway outside, where Civil Guards stood stiffly at attention with rifles at their sides, ramrod reminders of the solemnity of the service. Most of the crowd were civilians, rumpled and soiled after a fitful sleep in the chairs or on the floors of the Gobierno. They seemed to be grateful for the Mass and doubly grateful for the Guards; in the Alcázar one could attend Mass without having to endure the customary jeers and coarse jokes of the priest-haters who waited at the doors of churches and the cathedral in Toledo. In the front rank of worshippers Moscardó knelt.[50]

There would be fifty-four days of fire and blood before another Mass was said in the Alcázar of Toledo.

Later that Sunday the War Ministry in Madrid called Moscardó to order him to turn over the arms kept in the Alcázar. Moscardó demanded the order in writing, as it was his legal right to do; the War Ministry official said the written order would be delivered in the morning. Toledo was quiet that night; Moscardó dined at home with his family.

All during Monday the 20th—the day of the storming of the Montaña barracks in Madrid—Civil Guardsmen, many with their wives and families, streamed into the Alcázar, some in cars and trucks, others on horses and mules, totalling over 600. Twenty-three were captured on the way and either shot on the spot or sent to Madrid where they were later executed. In the evening Moscardó called a meeting of all his officers and said the time for decision had come. All committed themselves to the rising, and many (but strangely, not Moscardó himself) brought their families into the Alcázar with them. By the morning of the 21st they totalled about 1,800 souls: approximately 700 Civil Guardsmen, 250 officers and academy staff, 100 other men of

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[50]Cecil Eby, *The Siege of the Alcázar* (New York, 1965), p. 35. This is the definitive history of the siege, so well researched and thoroughly and judiciously presented that there is little need to use any other source.

military age, 550 women and 200 children. (However, not a single priest came in, to Moscardó's great regret.) Despite the danger, most of them were confident that the rising would prevail and they would soon be rescued. One of the women, Carmen Aragonés, widow of a soldier killed in battle in Morocco five years before, very beautiful and exceptionally vivacious, particularly helped to keep everyone's spirits high.

At seven o'clock in the morning a proclamation was read, first in the courtyard of the Alcázar beside the statue of Charles V and then in the Plaza de Zocodover, stating that Toledo no longer accepted the authority of the government in Madrid. Late in the morning an airplane circled the Alcázar and dropped leaflets urging its garrison to desert their officers who, the leaflets said, were deceiving them. Not a man left.

In the heat of the afternoon a roar of motors and a cloud of dust heralded the arrival of cars and trucks carrying 3,000 men, mostly militia, from Madrid, commanded by one of the highest ranking officers to support the revolutionary Republic, General José Riquelme. Moscardó set up machine guns to command the approach roads; their fire quickly stopped the advance, and an armored car sent forward by the attackers was blown up by a grenade. Riquelme's demand that the Alcázar surrender in fifteen minutes was scornfully ignored. In the midst of the attack Moscardó brought eight of ten trucks loaded with ammunition from the arms factory into the Alcázar; he now had 700,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, enough for his men to fight for many weeks.

Late that evening Riquelme telephoned Moscardó in person to demand his surrender again.[51] Moscardó abruptly refused. Riquelme asked him why he remained defiant.

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[51] Both sides in the Spanish Civil War usually kept their American-built telephone lines open and uncut, to facilitate communication between them at times like this.

"Because I love Spain and have confidence in General Franco," Moscardó avowed. "Furthermore, it would be dishonorable to surrender the arms of gentlemen to your Red rabble."

"Then I will seize them," Riquelme said.

"I hear you, General," Moscardó said.[52]

All the next day, Wednesday the 22nd, Riquelme's men shot at and shelled the Alcázar, with little effect, although their pressure did force Moscardó to withdraw all his men from the city to bring them within its sheltering walls and buildings. Late in the evening he called a meeting of his officers. Since their electricity had been cut off, the room was lit by acetylene torches. Moscardó explained (what apparently he had been told in Madrid on the 18th) that Mola would march south and Franco north to take Madrid and relieve them. Thanks to the haul from the arms factory, they had plenty of ammunition. Three cisterns and a swimming pool provided sufficient drinking water. He believed that food could still be obtained by raids into the city. In the middle of the meeting the Minister of Education in Giral's government, Francisco Barnés, called to urge Moscardó to surrender. (His primary concerns at that time were obviously in areas other than education.) Moscardó asked the other officers to vote. Most voted to maintain their resistance. He told Barnés they had done so.

"Then you will be responsible for the destruction of the Alcázar," Barnés said.

"I can only do my duty to Spain, sir," Moscardó replied.

"You know we have the artillery prepared and the troops ready," Barnés threatened. "We have the means to annihilate you. This is the last time you will have the opportunity to avoid spilling blood. Colonel, if you do not change your mind, I must order the attack immediately."

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[52]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, p. 49. Moscardó's final riposte, which Eby translates "I am informed," seems better rendered by the familiar modern American colloquialism.

Moscardó's dark eyes hardened to glittering points, like two spearheads of volcanic glass.

"*Then we will receive it!*" he said.[53]

All the next day, Thursday the 23rd, gunfire swept the Gobierno building and the streets around the Alcázar. The revolutionary militia from Madrid filled the narrow streets of the old city, bellowing curses at the Alcázar, shouting their hatred of Christ.

> From El Cristo de la Vega, a church near the arms factory, they brought a famous wooden image of Christ, and by working it like a puppet, tried to draw fire from the north windows of the fortress. When this failed, they shouted, "Here is El Cristo de la Vega. We are going to burn it. If you are true Catholics, you will come down here and stop us!" There was no reply from the Alcázar. Dismembering the effigy with axes, the militia threw the pieces upon a heap of debris in clear view of the windows [of the Alcázar]. But in igniting the bonfire, two militiamen rashly exposed themselves. Rifles cracked, the men dropped into the fire, and the smell of burning flesh mingled with the smoke from El Cristo de la Vega.[54]

One hundred and five priests and religious were killed in Toledo during the next two months, many of them that day.[55] Father Pascual Martín was gunned down in front of San Nicolás Church shouting "*Viva Cristo Rey!*" ("Hail Christ the King!") Father Pedro Ruiz de los Paños, director-general of the Brotherhood of Diocesan Priests in Spain and a leading developer of seminary education, was shot that day in front of the maternity hospital; Pope John Paul II beatified him on October 1, 1995. The rector of Toledo's seminary, José Sala, was martyred with him.[56] The Bible of St. Louis was taken from Toledo Cathedral and priceless works of art destroyed.

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[53]*Ibid.*, pp. 54-55. Emphasis added.

[54]*Ibid.*, p. 61.

[55]*Ibid.*, p. 59; Anastasio Granados, *El Cardenal Gomá, primado de España* (Madrid, 1969), pp. 86-87.

[56]Montero Moreno, *La Persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 625-

At seven o'clock in the morning of that day of horror in Toledo, Moscardó's 24-year-old son Luis was picked up for questioning by a militia patrol who did not know who he was. In Toledo as in many other cities of republican Spain, a committee of militant Socialists and anarchists had been set up to question persons suspected of disloyalty to the Republic. These committees were universally called "*checas*," the Spanish spelling of the name Lenin had given to the first Soviet secret police, CHEKAs. The head of Toledo's *checa* was a lawyer named Candido Cabello. He knew Luis Moscardó by sight. The moment he saw him, he decided to use him to bring about the surrender of the Alcázar. He picked up the telephone and called the boy's father. It was ten o'clock.

> After identifying himself, Cabello said, "You are responsible for all the crimes and everything else that is happening in Toledo. I give you ten minutes to surrender the Alcázar. If you don't, I'll shoot your son Luis who is standing here beside me."
>
> Moscardó's face did not betray his feeling. "I believe you," he said.
>
> "And so that you can see it's true," Cabello continued, "he will speak to you."
>
> Luis was then given the phone. "Papa!" he cried.
>
> "What is happening, my boy?"
>
> "Nothing," Luis answered. "They say they are going to shoot me if the Alcázar does not surrender. But don't worry about me."
>
> "If it is true," replied Moscardó, "commend your soul to God, shout '*Viva España*!' and die like a hero. Good-bye, my son, a kiss."
>
> "Good-bye, Father, a very big kiss."
>
> When Cabello was on the phone again, Moscardó said, "You might as well forget the period of grace you gave me. The Alcázar will never surrender!"

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626. For the beatifications of October 1 see *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 4, 1995.

> In the Diputación, Cabello slammed down the receiver violently and cursed briefly. Then he said to the militiamen around him, "Since his father wants it, do whatever you please with him." Luis Moscardó was led out.
>
> In the Alcázar, Colonel Moscardó stood for some moments in stony silence, his staff too stunned even to condole him. Without a word to anyone, he walked into his sleeping quarters in the next room and quietly shut the door.[57]

Luis was not killed immediately; but he was shot exactly one month later, on August 23, while the siege of the Alcàzar still continued. But at almost exactly this time Moscardó's oldest son, Pepe, was arrested in Barcelona, where after the defeat of the rising he had disguised himself for five days as a hospital orderly. He was about to board a train out of the city when a medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary slipped out of his pocket and was seen by another passenger in the station. A few days later he was executed like so many others in that now demonic city.

In the otherwise completely restored Alcázar of Toledo today, the room where Colonel Moscardó received that telephone call from Candido Cabello is preserved exactly as it was sixty years ago. On its scored and battered walls hang translations of this conversation in most of the principal languages of the world. A contemporary Socialist government, no longer revolutionary but hardly sympathetic, has removed all the most vivid and shocking mementoes of the great siege[58]—all but this, which they have not dared to touch.

Six hundred and forty-two years before, in the year 1294, an army of Moors was besieging the walled city of Tarifa on the Straits of Gibraltar, whose garrison was commanded by Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán, called "the Good." A renegade Spanish

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[57]Eby, *Siege of the Alcàzar*, p. 62.

[58]The plaque which commemorated the one Mass said during the siege with the beautiful tribute "Here the Divine King visited our heroes," is gone; so are the contemporary photographs showing Communist attackers of the Alcàzar bearing the red flag of the Soviet Union with its hammer and sickle.

prince with the Moorish army had captured Pérez de Guzmán's son, and demanded the surrender of Tarifa as the price of the boy's life. Guzmán the Good refused, answering the renegade prince's message by flinging a sword over the ramparts. Tarifa held out until it was relieved with the aid of a fleet from Aragon, but not before Guzmán's son was killed as the prince had threatened.

So does the Christian present enlace the past—especially in Spain. Such is the courage of crusaders.

On Friday, July 24, three Discalced Carmelite sisters (the order founded by St. Teresa of Avila) were recognized by militia in a Madrid street near the apartment where they had been hiding. "Nuns! Shoot them!" one of the militiamen cried. They opened fire at once on the helpless women, killing one instantly and severely wounding another, who fell to the pavement in agony, crying "My God! My God!" Several Assault Guards appeared, stopped the shooting, and directed that the wounded nun be taken to a hospital, hailing a passing bus for that purpose. Told that the victim was a nun, the bus driver cried: "Give her here and I'll finish her off!" Another bus was hailed, and this one took her to the hospital, where she died saying, with Christ: "My God, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The third nun escaped for the moment, wandered distracted through the streets, and was eventually accosted by a man who pretended to want to help her, but turned her over to another group of militia who shot her also before the day was done.[59]

On the next day, the 25th—the great feast of Santiago—Father Dionisio Pamplona and 24 others taken from prison were

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[59]Montero Moreno, *La Persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 521-523. As this is perhaps the most horrifying of all the accounts of martyrdom in those hellish days, it should be emphasized that it is fully researched and vouched for by the historian recognized by all serious students as the pre-eminent authority on the religious persecution in Spain during the Civil War.

shot on the Plaza Mayor in the heart of Madrid in full view of a large number of people. It was also on that day that militia from Madrid occupied Sigüenza, about seventy miles to the northeast. The Bishop of Sigüenza, Eustaquio Nieto, 72 years old, had held his episcopal office for nineteen years. Five years before, when the Republic was established in Spain and the burning of churches began, he had said in a letter to his flock:

> If unfortunately there is unleashed against us a furious persecution instigated by the hatred of Hell, we will remain firm at our posts, fulfilling our priestly duties, never abandoning our sheep, confessing Christ always in the face of the world as the martyrs, the virgins, and the confessors confessed Him, who gave their blood and their lives to exalt and defend the sacred name of Jesus.[60]

Exactly that he was to do.

Early in the afternoon of the feast of Santiago the prefect of the minor seminary at Sigüenza, Father José Ruiz Cano, gathered his students—boys eleven to fifteeen—to tell them that the school would have to close "for a few days." He exhorted them: "God is everywhere. He sees our thoughts and our affections. We should prefer to give our blood rather than to sear our souls with the stain of sin." Then he prayed to the Blessed Virgin Mary: "Mother, if you want a victim, here am I. Choose me, but do not allow anything to happen to these innocent souls who have never harmed anyone."[61] He divided the boys into two groups. The older one reached the Nationalist zone safely. The younger group, which he kept with him, was caught two days later. Father Ruiz Cano's body was found riddled with bullets.

On the day he was killed, July 27, Bishop Nieto of Sigüenza, seized and "judged" by a street mob, was shot at the Kilometer 4 marker on the highway from Sigüenza to Estriégana

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[60] *Ibid.*, p. 364.

[61] Rev. Pedro Garcia, *Singing into Life; Young 20th Century Martyrs*, ed. Warren H. Carroll (Chicago, n.d.), pp. 32-33.

as he cried "*Viva Cristo Rey!*" His body was burned and thrown into a gully, where Nationalist troops later found and recognized it by its pectoral cross.[62]

Also on the feast of Santiago 14 seminarians, who had attempted to flee with one of their teachers, Father Manuel Jové, were captured in the open country by militiamen from Lérida in Catalonia. The militiamen tried to force Father Jové to trample on a crucifix; when he refused, they forced it into his mouth until it gushed blood. They tried to make one of the seminarians swallow a rosary. Horribly beaten and abused, every one of these young martyrs stood firm for his faith, saying he wished to die for God. All of them were shot at the cemetery of Lérida at noon the next day.[63]

In Madrid, several priests had taken refuge in an apartment at 22 Calle de Velázquez, where they improvised a chapel for the celebration of the feast of Santiago. On the next day militia burst into the apartment. On seeing the chapel they exploded into an orgy of destruction, smashing and destroying all its contents, throwing images, candelabras, religious books, and clerical vestments out the window and burning the remnants on the street. The priest they found there, Father Miguel Leivar y Garay, and two servants—one a woman—were taken away and shot at once. An almost identical scene was enacted July 28 in the Madrid suburb of Griñón, where militia broke into the residence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, seized the ten Brothers present, and made a ferocious assault on their crucifixes. One man ripped a crucifix off the wall of the dining area, flung it to the floor, and when it did not break, hammered it to bits with his rifle butt. Another threw a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the flagstones with all his strength, breaking off its head. The ten Brothers were then shot in front of their chapel.[64]

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[62]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, p. 368.
[63]*Ibid.*, pp. 235-236; Garcia, *Singing into Life*, pp. 25-27.
[64]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 322-324, 576-577.

In all, 124 priests were killed in Madrid during the last ten days of July.[65] After July 25, no Mass was publicly celebrated again anywhere in Republican Spain, with the sole exception of the Basque provinces, until the end of the Civil War. Churches not burned or sacked were closed and locked. Even the Communists in the Soviet Union did not go quite this far. The only historical parallel is Paris at the height of the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution.

In Barcelona the devastation of the Church was almost complete. From July 19 to the end of the month, 220 churches and public chapels were destroyed in that city alone, mostly in the first two days after the fall of the Ataranzas barracks, and 197 priests were killed, along with unspeakable violations of the bodies of the dead.[66] American reporter Edward Knoblaugh gives an eyewitness account of the detritus of this holocaust:

> Only the blackened walls remained of the historic religious buildings. The statues and paintings had been destroyed or removed, the altars ripped out, the stained glass windows broken. The burial vaults in the floors of some of the churches had been forced open and the century-old mummified bodies of nuns and priests had been removed from their mouldy resting-places. On the steps of the Carmelite church were arrayed a dozen or more of the skeletons of nuns in standing and reclining postures.[67]

From Barcelona, in the last days of July, anarchist columns fanned out in all directions to wreak havoc in every city and town they could reach. The most famous was Durruti's column of three thousand anarchists. Its announced objective was Zaragoza, but that city was now strongly held by a garrison which included the Maria de las Nieves *tercio* of the Requeté.

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 56n.

[66] *Ibid.*; Carreras, *Glory of Martyred Spain*, pp. 76-77.

[67] H. Edward Knoblaugh, *Correspondent in Spain* (New York, 1937), p. 32.

So Durruti stopped short, contenting himself and his men with seizing and ravaging Barbastro in Aragon, threatening to kill all prisoners there, including numerous clergy and religious.

Less than two hundred miles from Barcelona, in Pamplona the capital of Navarra, the feast of Santiago was celebrated in an utterly different manner. No one will ever understand the history and meaning of the Spanish Civil War who does not appreciate the magnitude of the contrast between what happened in those two cities on that same great feast day. In the central square of Pamplona a solemn and splendid Mass was offered to "beseech the Most High for the triumph of the forces which fight for the salvation of Spain."[68] General Miguel Cabanellas, a late and uncertain recruit to the rising, attended wearing a Carlist red beret. The crusaders were already making their mark on the officers who had joined the undertaking for less exalted and more worldly motives.

Not far distant, in the city of Logroño which the requetés had occupied on the first day of the Carlist rising, the requetés celebrated the Mass of the great national fiesta in the field. Juan Urra Lusarreta, whose unit attended daily Mass at a parish in Logroño dedicated to Santiago, served at the altar. After Mass he spoke to the men about their crusading mission. They heard him with enthusiasm and many shouts of "*Viva Cristo Rey*!"

A day or two later Navarrese Carlist leader Joaquín Baleztena issued a formal order that no Carlist was to carry out acts of violence against civilians, and was to make every effort to prevent such acts from being committed in his presence. It was already clear that the unprecedented horrors taking place in Republican Spain would generate an enormous demand for indiscriminate revenge. The soldiers of Christ in the Traditionalist Communion should remember that God said, "Vengeance is Mine."

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[68]Guillermo Cabanellas, *La Guerra de los mil días*, Volume I (Mexico City, 1973), p. 635.

About the end of July Manuel Fal Conde received a letter, written on the feast of Santiago, from Alfonso Carlos in Vienna, who had never in his 87 years laid down the crusading banner:

> Above all we must save religion, country and fatherland. I am grateful in my soul for you and our heroic requetés united with the soldiers of Spain to hammer communism, and I give you infinite thanks, dear Fal, for having, following my guidance, provided in the decisive moment that our requetés should support the saving movement. In times like these we ought not to be concerned with personal and partisan questions, but seek to save all joined together for religion and fatherland. I am sure that today the great Saint will fight at the head of this army of crusaders [legend told of many apparitions of St. James the Apostle leading Spanish Christians into battle against the Moors during the long crusade of the Reconquest] crying "*Viva España*!" Our country was always the leader of the Catholic religion and of generous ideas, and has just shown once more its vitality and its great tradition arising so admirably against the enemies of God and Spain, who wish to subjugate her now. I congratulate our Carlist provinces, our Traditionalist-Carlist Communion and our heroic requetés and recognize the great sacrifices they are making of their blood and their lives for God and our fatherland, and I ask you to make known my profound satisfaction, enthusiasm and admiration.[69]

Also on that same action-packed feast of Santiago, General Riquelme left the siege of the Alcázar of Toledo (where one lucky cannon shot by the besiegers that day blew a hole in the wall near the north entrance big enough to drive an armored car through, only to have the defenders plug it with a mass of pillowcases stuffed with dirt) and went to Lion's Peak in the Guadarramas to launch an attack on Requeté Colonel Serrador's defenders of the pass with a full brigade. On the high rocky sad-

[69]Alfonso Carlos to Manuel Fal Conde, July 25, 1936, in Melchor Ferrer, ed. *Documentos de Don Alfonso Carlos de Borbón y de Austria-Este* (Madrid, 1950), pp. 305-306.

dle against the sky, the heavily outnumbered crusaders fought the revolutionaries hand-to-hand with the bayonet all that day and the next. Colonel Serrador was wounded and many of his officers were killed. The attackers also suffered heavily; Captain Condés, leader of the group that had killed Calvo Sotelo, was among the dead. But by nightfall of the 26th the situation of the defenders was desperate; they had to have help. Let Serrador himself tell the story of how it came, as he remembered it when later presenting a unit citation to the *tercio* which reached him in the nick of time:

> You were the guardians of the Faith and the holy tradition of Spain, preservers of the purity of our customs, the serenity of our government and the austerity of its administration. . . . I will never forget when during the night of the 26th of July in 1936, which was the most difficult and critical in the defense of the Lion's Peak, they told me that the next day 500 requetés would arrive as reinforcements, and I said with joy: "If these requetés do honor to their forebears, there is no one who can throw us off these cliffs!" You arrived at dawn of the 27th and I received you; you came without orders, without formations, even without organization, but you did not disappoint me. You were requetés, and that was enough![70]

For the second time in less than a week, General Riquelme withdrew frustrated before the unwavering fortitude of the champions of the last crusade. The wearers of the red beret still held Lion's Peak Pass.

Far to the north, in the Galician naval base of El Ferrol, Captain Salvador Moreno Fernández had retaken the cruiser *Almirante Cervera*, seized by its crew on the day of the rising. Though the loyal sailors he found to man it were less than half its normal complement, he took it along the coast of the Bay of Biscay to the Asturian port of Gijón, where he had heard that the Simancas barracks under Colonel Pinilla was still holding out for

[70]Redondo and Zavala, *El Requeté*, pp. 429-430.

the Nationalist cause. Like the defenders of the Alcázar of Toledo, they refused to think of surrender, though their position was far less defensible. Faced with artillery bombardment and flaming gasoline cans hurled into their enclosure, they counter-attacked, driving the attackers back. They had no source of light whatever at night, whose hours crawled by in a pit of total blackness. But they had battery-operated radios, and from them learned with joy of the arrival of the *Almirante Cervera* on July 29. The barracks was in easy range of the cruiser's heavy guns, which immediately began to bombard its besiegers.

On July 26 a meeting of international Communist leaders was held in Prague to organize massive aid for the revolutionary Republic. French Communist railway union leader Gaston Monmousseau presided. It was decided to commit one billion francs to aid the Republic, administered and distributed by a committee including Spanish Communist Party leader José Díaz and chief propagandist Dolores Ibarruri ("*La Pasionaria*"), Largo Caballero, French Communist Party leader Maurice Thorez, and Italian Communist Party leader Palmiro Togliatti. The bulk of the money was to come from the Soviet Union, the rest from left-wing fund-raising in Europe and America. Comintern leaders, including Vittorio Codovilla of Argentina (long active in Spain), Togliatti, Stepanov of Bulgaria, and Ernö Gerö of Hungary, moved immediately to tighten their control over the leadership and organization of the Spanish Communist Party.

The Popular Front government of France was also at this time prepared to help the Republic, though soon afterward it drew back. At the end of July the first French aircraft—Potez bombers and Dewoitine fighters—left for Spain from airports in southern France. On July 29 the first German aircraft—Junkers 52s, usable for transport or bombing—arrived in Morocco to augment the airlift of Franco's troops across the Straits of Gibraltar. The next day nine Italian Savoia bombers came to Morocco from Italy for the same purpose, though their relative value

compared to the German planes was already suggested by the fact that three of them crashed on the way.

On July 24 the Nationalists had established what purported to be their first organized government, a *junta* (council) at Burgos under the nominal presidency of General Cabanellas, who was the senior general in the north, though Mola was actually in overall command of the Nationalist troops (mostly requetés and Falangists) in that part of the country. The other members of the *junta* were relatively insignificant (neither Franco nor Queipo de Llano were yet included in it). Mola and Cabanellas did not fully trust each other, and the Carlists and Falangists did not fully trust them or each other. The two generals, impressed by the crusading fervor of the requetés, were gradually being won over to a better appreciation of the Carlists, but still did not feel them to be sufficiently under their control.

The result was that this Burgos *junta* never became a real government, nor exercised any authority whatsoever outside the areas of northern Spain (from the Guadarrama Mountains to Navarra) which their forces had wrested from the Republic. At this point the only substantial part of southern Spain under Nationalist control was Andalusia (except for the port of Málaga and the coastal area near it, still held for the Republic). Andalusia was administered, in default of anyone else, by Queipo de Llano and his friends.[7] In assessing responsibility for the Nationalist atrocities that did occur in August and September, it is essential to remember that during those two apocalyptic months there was no overall Nationalist government with genuine authority. None of the Nationalist generals had the capability to overrule any other not under their direct command, nor even to learn much about what was going on in other command areas. The same, of course, was true of the government of the Republic, if by that government is meant President Azaña and Prime Min

[7]These facts are clearly stated and granted by Franco's very hostile biographer, Paul Preston (*Franco*, pp. 155-156).

ister Giral. No one has ever thought that Azaña or Giral controlled or authorized the looting, murder, and massacre which swept Republican territory during this terrible summer. But the implication or even the outright accusation is still heard that Franco and Mola had such knowledge and responsibility for the rarer atrocities inflicted by Nationalists.

Only academics cut off from human reality by the walls of their study, invincible naiveté or prejudice, could expect that crimes of the type already described here would not arouse at least in some men an anger so ferocious as to override all moral considerations, or that other men would not use these horrors as an excuse for moves to gain personal advantage or personal vengeance. Men are not angels. No cause purifies everyone who fights in its name. To a degree perhaps not surprising in an age which has so largely abandoned reason as well as faith, men have forgotten that the justice of a war is not determined by acts committed by any individuals during it. It is determined at the outset by the right or wrong of taking up arms, and the prospects for success with them.

The planners of the Spanish military rising of July 1936 believed they could win quickly, with little bloodshed, and save Spain from the fate of Russia which so much evidence indicated it was about to share. With better planning and better fortune they might well have done so. It was a risk worth taking. The alternative was what actually happened: a devastating war that took more than 250,000 lives. But even that was preferable to what happened to Russia and its conquered provinces in the Soviet Union, where the Communist Party of the Soviet Union enslaved all the people for 74 years, killing more than twenty million of them, and ruining their economy for at least a generation more. That was the price of victory by the revolution. The one alternative these men of Spain absolutely rejected was to allow the revolution to win without a fight. Many others in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century lacked their transcendent courage. Their bones, and the bones of those who were

lost because of their hesitation and uncertainty, moulder in forgotten graves from the Katyn Forest in Belarus to the Kolyma River in far northeastern Siberia. There are times when a man must stand or die. Spain in July 1936 was one of them.

August

In the late afternoon of August 2 the first Nationalist striking column of the army being airlifted across the Straits of Gibraltar, consisting of 550 Legionnaires and 350 Moroccans, left Sevilla heading north. Their commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Carlos Asensio, had orders from Franco to march into harsh dry Extremadura to take its key city of Badajoz on the Portuguese border, then link up with Mola's northern forces if possible, and march on Madrid. Another column left Sevilla the following day.

On August 5 Colonel Asensio encountered the first significant resistance, from militia dug in at the little town of Almendralejo just south of Mérida. The next day he was bombed from the air. He was ordered to wait for reinforcements.

He did not have to wait long. On August 5 a full 3,000 soldiers—again, mostly Legionnaires and Moroccans—were brought across the Straits in 11 aircraft and several merchant ships, escorted by a Nationalist gunboat with mostly German and Italian fighters providing air cover. The warships controlled by the Republic at Cartagena and Málaga made no attempt to stop them. Franco flew to Spain from Morocco the next day and assembled his recently transported soldiers into a column of 8,000 led by Colonel Yagüe, which set out at once on a forced march. Nothing could have better demonstrated the physical toughness and combat readiness of these men than this initial march. In just five days they covered the 130 miles to Mérida under the blazing sun of an Andalusian August, which no one who has been there during that season will ever forget. That meant marching more than 25 miles a day.[1]

[1]The usually reliable Hugh Thomas (*The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. [New York, 1986], pp. 371, 373) accepts Republican propaganda about

Much was made in propaganda by the Republic, still echoed by many historians today, about the incongruity or worse of Christian rebels using "Moors" from Morocco in a reconquest in reverse, after their co-religionists had been so completely defeated in the original Reconquest. The point is specious and the analogy does not hold. No Nationalist proposed for a moment to give Moroccans any role in the government of Spain. They were simply troops whose loyalty could be counted on. Every European power with overseas colonial territories in those days used colonial troops. There is credible evidence of atrocities on their part, as happen in every war and as certainly happened on a grand scale in the armies and militia of the Republic. But there is also credible evidence of a convergence of motivation and purpose between these Muslims and the Spanish crusaders also shown at other points in the fascinating history of the interaction of Christianity and Islam: when Christian and Muslim face each other, they are usually hostile and often violently so; but when they jointly face an external atheist enemy, they become strong allies. The most recent example of this is the magnificent struggle of the *mujahideen* or freedom fighters of Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, and the aid—both personal and material—provided them from the West.[2] The fervently Catholic requeté chaplain Juan Urra Lusarreta has this to say about his Muslim comrades-in-arms:

> In the land of Spain some renegades rejected the Faith, profaned the churches, and killed the priests; by contrast, some simple Muslims adored God and commended themselves to

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a prolonged and bloody procedure whereby Yagüe's column would stop at every village, bombard it for half an hour, and kill anyone thought to be loyal to the Republic. Thomas evidently does not realize that no army marching 25 miles a day could possibly have time for such procedures.

[2]I am personally familiar with the case of a former U.S. army officer (a Green Beret) of Lithuanian descent who rediscovered his Catholic Faith while fighting with the Afghan *mujahideen* against the Soviets.

> Him. It is not difficult to see that these men, who wore djillabahs and other country clothing, were people of simple and great religious conviction, who came to help us. As good Spaniards we had to be grateful to them. Their cooperation was very valuable, and their conduct, despite the false rumors and calumny of the Reds, was disciplined and correct, despite some isolated cases, more of robbery than of anything else.[3]

At Almendralejo was fought the first battle of this vital campaign, upon which the victory of the crusade ultimately depended (for the Nationalists had to establish a substantial area of control from the south to the north of Spain for their cause to be viable through a long war). A wild-haired anarchist virago named Anita López commanded the defense. Reckless fury and murderous hate could not make up for lack of military experience in that situation. In close quarters, defending a great city like Madrid, the revolutionaries in arms were to prove themselves formidable opponents even for professional soldiers; but in the open they were always outmaneuvered. Yagüe took Mérida on the 10th, held it against a counterattack on the 11th, and then moved west to Badajoz. Other Nationalist troops opened a corridor of communication and supply to Mola in the north, sending him the ammunition he desperately needed after the prolonged battles for the Guadarrama passes.

Badajoz, an old stone city with narrow streets, was held by 8,000 defenders—as many men as Yagüe had, in a place that gave the attackers no room to maneuver. Artillery was brought up and bombarded the city all during the morning of the 14th. But stone cities take a very long time to batter down, while the rubble of smashed stone buildings often serves the defense as well or better than the original structure. Yagüe had to make a frontal attack. He sent the 16th Company of the Fourth *Bandera*

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[3]Juan Urra Lusarreta, *En las trincheras frente del Madrid: Memorias de un capellán de requetés, herido de guerra* (Madrid, 1967), pp. 108-109.

of the Legion to lead it. They advanced on Trinidad Gate, singing their regimental song about how death was their bride. Only 16 of the company's 200 men survived, but they broke through the gate. Other units rushed in. Many of the combatants were literally too close to shoot. Bayonets and long knives flashed and glittered. The revolutionaries resisted fanatically. Hand-to-hand fighting continued until sundown, most fiercely in the Plaza de la República at the center of the city, in the shadow of its cathedral. Officers on both sides lost control of their men. Fighting raged even inside the cathedral; Legionnaires struck down Republican militiamen on the very steps of the altar. Yagüe had no place to put prisoners and no men to spare to guard them. Many of those fighting against him wore no uniforms. He allowed his men to kill anyone they found with a weapon in his hands, or who bore the mark of a rifle's recoil upon his shoulder. About two thousand of the defenders died—how many during the battle and how many immediately after it, no man can say.

It was called a massacre, wildly exaggerated by foreign correspondents and Republican propaganda at the time and by many historians ever since. But a massacre is a slaughter of helpless men, women or children who have no arms and cannot escape. (There were many of these to come, mostly inflicted by the revolutionaries.) All through history the storming of a heavily defended city has led to scenes like those enacted at Badajoz August 14, 1936. They are part of the generic horror of war; but no one at a safe distance, writing at a safe desk, is in a position to judge men fighting in such a place, against such enemies, in so savage a struggle. Let him who has met death face to face across the blade of a revolutionary's knife cast the first stone. Blood is thicker than ink.

On the first of August Republican General Riquelme returned to the Alcázar of Toledo to begin a massive artillery bombardment of its buildings. On that day alone 140 shells were fired at it from 105-millimeter cannon. The Picadero building was completely destroyed, and the whole of the Alcázar was

"completely enveloped in rolling clouds of black smoke."[4] The bombardment continued daily; on the 4th, 170 shells were fired.

It was now clear to everyone that the siege of the Alcázar would probably go on for a long time, and the question of food became critical. (There was plenty of water in three full cisterns and the swimming pool, and plenty of ammunition thanks to Moscardó's foresight in bringing in eight truckloads of it from the arms factory in Toledo.) Moscardó's original idea of replenishing the food supplies of the garrison from the city had proved impracticable due to the number and aggressiveness of the besiegers. On July 27 the last flour in the fortress had been baked into bread and distributed. Only a little wheat and some beans remained; but there were 97 horses and 27 mules in the Alcázar, enough to provide a small serving of meat for everyone if one animal was killed daily. Fat from the slaughtered horses and mules could also be used to fuel dim lamps to provide some light during the nights. But without bread the garrison could not long keep up its fighting strength.

On July 29 Isidore Clamagiraud, a Frenchman who had owned a bakery in Toledo, told the officers in the Alcázar that he had heard of a warehouse filled with wheat, collected by the Bank of Bilbao as part payment on its loans, located close by the fortress. At first he was not believed; the rumor seemed too good to be true, and a bank collecting payments in wheat too peculiar. But Clamagiraud persisted, and cudgelled his memory until he recalled where he had heard the wheat was kept—in a warehouse under a terrace accessible from the ruins of the Picadero. In the night of August 3 twenty men crawled out on the terrace and made a hole through it and in the roof of the building below. A soldier named Pérez Molero was lowered down by rope, struck a match, and found himself surrounded by hundreds of sacks full of wheat. Twenty-three sacks were brought up that night. Moscardó went immediately to the chapel

[4]Cecil B. Eby, *The Siege of The Alcázar* (New York, 1965), p. 82.

to give thanks to the Blessed Virgin Mary for hearing and answering their prayers to her for help. No less than 2,000 sacks of wheat were found in the warehouse. Their contents were ground into flour by the engine of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle hooked up to a small mill which had been used to grind feed for the horses and mules. Now the Alcázar could not be starved out.

On August 8 a Republican plane dropped sixteen 100-pound bombs on the Alcázar, wounding many inside. Another plane later dropped three tear gas bombs, which were at first taken for poison gas, which the defenders feared above all. But a druggist among them had planned for this and prepared kindling for fires around the central court, which were lit, creating a draft of hot air pulling the gas out of the enclosed areas. They soon realized it was not lethal. The next day there were more air attacks and exceptionally heavy artillery fire. Nine of the garrison deserted through the Gobierno building, letting themselves down by ropes. Moscardó doubled the guard on the Gobierno and declared that henceforth possession of a rope by any unathorized individual would be punishable by death. The bombardment continued into the night, the besiegers illuminating their target with searchlights. In the words of Cecil Eby:

> Perhaps the most spectacular sight of the war was the Alcázar under floodlights, immaculately white above the dim skyline of the darkened city, especially during bombardment. Black puffs sprouted from luminous walls, gray debris and dust dropped down, and a dry crackle reverberated in the gorge.[5]

And so, all through the first half of August, the Alcázar of Toledo—battered, air-bombed, fire-bombed, gassed—stood over the ancient city on its looming crag like a pillar of cloud against the night, defiant of men and devils. José Moscardó had pledged

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[5]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

on the life of his son that the Alcázar would never surrender, and it did not.

Two hundred and fifty miles to the north, under even worse conditions, the Simancas barracks in Gijón still held out under the equally unbending Colonel Antonio Pinilla. He and his men beat off a night attack on August 3 with the help of gunfire from the cruiser *Almirante Cervera*, still standing just offshore to support them. Two days later they repelled another attack at dawn, again with the cruiser's fire behind them. On the 6th their morale was raised by Nationalist planes which flew over the barracks and, with remarkable accuracy, dropped both food and medicines into the narrow enclosure. On the 8th the cruiser had to leave for a day, and an adjoining building held by Colonel Pinilla's men, the Zapadores barracks, was almost taken in another night attack. (The defenders, it must be remembered, had no lights at all; they could only fight at night by aiming at the gun flashes of the enemy.) The cruiser returned on the 9th. On the 13th some of the defenders of the more endangered Zapadores barracks deserted, seeing no hope of rescue or of prolonging the defense much longer; but 117 heroes remained there, along with about 200 in the Simancas barracks. On the 14th, in the city of Gijón, cursing and blaspheming revolutionary soldiers took 116 prisoners, including ten priests and two Capuchin brothers, out of the church of Santa Fe, where they had been holding them, and shot them all at Jové cemetery. They also fired on a statue of Christ[6]—as happened on a number of other occasions during this period. On the 15th the besiegers attempted to burn the barracks with flaming gasoline, but were once more driven back.

In Aragon during August, Buenaventura Durruti, the anarchist firebrand who had led the storming of the Ataranzas barracks in Barcelona, was telling the world what he intended to do

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[6]Joaquín A. Bonet, *Simancas! Epopeya de los cuarteles de Gijón*, 2nd ed. (Gijón, 1939), pp. 157, 207; Antonio Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 346-348.

to his country and his people. He said to Canadian reporter Pierre van Paassen: "We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth. The bourgeoisie may blast and ruin their world before they leave the stage of history. But we carry a new world in our hearts." Later in the month, after boasting that he would soon lead a victorious attack on Zaragoza, he said to Russian journalist Mikhail Koltsov: "We shall subordinate ourselves neither to Madrid nor Barcelona, neither to Azaña nor Companys. . . . We shall show *you*, Bolsheviks, how to make a revolution."[7]

Durruti could hardly have failed to hear the story, quickly spread all over Spain, of how on August 3 Republican aircraft had dropped three bombs on the shrine of Our Lady of Pilar in Zaragoza, one of the most revered in the whole country, but not one of them exploded; while one, striking a street in front of the church, left the mark of a cross in the pavement. On August 8 Durruti returned with his column to the small city of Barbastro in Republican-controlled Aragon to announce his intention to eliminate "dangerous persons," among them the Bishop of Barbastro, Florencio Asensio. When Durruti spoke thus, everyone knew he meant it. That night Bishop Asensio finished a novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and said to his fellow prisoners: "My sons, I wish to give my last benediction, and afterward, like Our Lord Jesus, I will celebrate my last supper with you."[8] At three o'clock in the morning he was taken from prison saying, "What a beautiful night this is for me! I go to the house of the Lord!"[9] He was shot at Kilometer 3 on the road from Barbastro to Sariñena and left for dead. He lived for two hours upon a pile of corpses, then delivered up his soul. Afterwards his body was mutilated.

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[7]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), pp. 430, 319, respectively.
[8]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, p. 384.
[9]Rev. Pedro Garcia, *Singing into Life. Young Twentieth Century Martyrs*, ed. Warren H. Carroll (Chicago, n.d.), p. 66.

That same day the 78-year-old Bishop of Segorbe, Miguel Serra Sucarrate, was shot; the day before, the Bishop of Cuenca, Cruz Laplana Laguna, was killed at Kilomter 5 on the road from Cuenca to Villar de Olalla, saying triumphantly to his murderers:

> Do you not believe in Heaven? Heaven *is*, my sons! Do you not believe in Hell? Hell *is*, my sons! . . . You can kill me: my body I leave behind, but my soul will rise to Heaven . . . I pardon you and in Heaven I will pray for you.[10]

Four days earlier, on August 5, Bishop Silvio Huix of Lérida, after saying Mass for his fellow prisoners earlier in the day, was taken to a cemetery for killing with 22 laymen. He asked to be the last of the group shot, so that he might give absolution to each of the others before they were struck down. A week later, on August 12, auxiliary Bishop Manuel Borrás of Tarragona was executed beside a highway, his body mutilated and then partially burned with gasoline. And on that day the Bishop of Jaén in Andalusia, Manuel Basulto Jiménez, was taken from a prison train going to Madrid by a mob at a railway station on the way and killed at Vallecas with 200 other prisoners including his sister Teresa, who begged for her brother's life until she was cut down by a hideous freckled militia-woman named Josefa Coso. Bishop Basulto Jiménez died on his knees, asking God to forgive his sins and his assassins.[11]

Within a single week, six Spanish bishops had been martyred. Nothing like it had been seen since the ancient Roman persecution of Diocletian. Even the massacres of September 1792 in the French Revolution took the lives of only two bishops.

On August 10 the Vatican pointed out that the Spanish Republican government had made no real effort to stop the killing

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[10]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, p. 378. Emphasis added.

[11]*Ibid.*, pp. 372-373, 395, 401-402.

of priests and religious in Spain or the destruction of churches there, nor had it offered any public expression of regret for these atrocities nor condemned their perpetrators.

In the prison at Barbastro an entire community of Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, known as Claretians for their founder, the 19th-century Spanish saint Antonio Maria Claret, awaited Durruti's decision on their fate. The community included nine priests, twelve lay brothers and 39 seminarians. They had been seized on July 20, the day of the fall of the Ataranzas barracks in Barcelona, when the anarchists and militant Socialists gained full control of Catalonia and some adjoining parts of Aragon including Barbastro. The prison was a small old building without sanitary facilities, severely overcowded, with only 16 to 20 square yards per prisoner. Twenty-one of the Claretians were confined in a small unfurnished cell ventilated only by a window twelve by six inches, in the oppressive heat of a Spanish summer. Every day some came to taunt them and their fellow prisoners and call for their killing soon.

At 3:30 in the morning of August 12 four Claretian priests and two deacons were taken from Barbastro prison for execution. They were the first of the martyrs of this community, all of whom were beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1994. The other Claretians were now being held together in a larger room, formerly used as an auditorium. There that day they wrote their last message, on a chocolate bar wrapper:

> August 12, 1936, Barbastro. Six of our companions are now martyrs. Soon we too shall join their ranks, but before we do we want to state that we forgive all who take our lives. We offer our lives for the Christianization of the workingmen, for the reign of the Catholic Church, for our beloved Congregation, and for our dear families. This is the last offering of its martyred sons to their Congregation.[12]

[12]Garcia, *Singing into Life*, pp. 70-71.

Immediately after midnight of the 13th the hour struck for their next martyrdom. The prisoners were assembled on the stage of the former auditorium. Mariano Abad, the gravedigger and a militiaman known for his ferocity, read out the names of twenty Claretians. As each young man's name was called, he leaped from the stage to the floor; in the words of one of them who escaped death because of his Argentine citizenship, "their faces glowed with an indescribably supernatural air."[13] They were bound with ropes stained by the blood of earlier martyrs, which they kissed fervently. One of their priests gave them general absolution. As they marched out under guard they began to sing, and continued singing all the way to the killing place, on a nearby highway overlooking a ravine. Most often they sang the hymn of the International Eucharistic Congress which had been held in Madrid:

> Let us sing to the Love of loves;
> Let us sing to the Lord, for God is here!
> Let us adore Christ the Redeemer;
> Glory to Christ Jesus!
> Heaven and earth, bless the Lord
> We will love You always, God of love![14]

At the last moment they were offered their lives if they would join the revolutionary militia. Every one of them refused. They knelt on the ground, extending their arms in the form of a cross. In that posture all of them were shot, and buried in their cassocks.

Twenty-one more Claretians had already been told they would die the same death the following night. During the day one of them, Faustino Pérez, managed to smuggle out a letter to his Claretian superiors reporting the martyrdom of 26 of their

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

community already and the forthcoming martyrdom of 21 more, and saying:

> We all die praying to God that the blood from our wounds may not be a vengeful blood, but that it may run red and full of life in your veins, to stimulate your growth and development all over the world. Good-bye, dear Congregation! Your sons, the martyrs of Barbastro, salute you from prison and offer you our sorrow and anguish as a holocaust to expiate our faults, our weaknesses, and as a testimony of our faithful, generous and eternal love. The martyrs of tomorrow, the 14th, are mindful of the fact that they die on the eve of the Assumption. What a remembrance that will be! We die for the right to wear the cassock and we die on the very anniversary of the day on which we were clothed in it.[15]

On that same day, the 13th, in the town of Cervera, 30-year-old Claretian Brother Fernando Saperas was martyred by militia after they had attempted for 15 hours to induce or force him to violate his vow of chastity. On that one day, 104 priests were martyred throughout Spain.[16]

The remaining Claretians at Barbastro were not, for unexplained reasons, killed as scheduled in the early morning hours of the 14th, but rather at that time on the 15th, the great feast of the Assumption. They too sang all the way to their killing place, especially the Salve Regina. Let us hear, in conclusion, not again from them but from one of their murderers, Verbegal of the Civil Guard, giving Hells own testimony to their constancy:

> Those God-damned fools! No one could shut them up! All the way they sang and praised Christ the King. One of them fell dead when we hit him with the butt of a gun, and this is no lie. But the more we hit them, the more they sang and shouted: "*Viva Cristo Rey!*"[17]

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[15]*Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 49-57; George Hills, *The Battle for Madrid* (New York, 1976), p. 68.

[17]Garcia, *Singing into Life*, p. 82.

On that feast of the Assumption the newspaper *Workers' Solidarity* in Barcelona flaunted an enormous headline DOWN WITH THE CHURCH! Its editorial read:

> The Church must disappear forever. . . . The wretched little Catholic holes no longer exist. The torches of the people have pulverized them. In their place rises a free spirit that has nothing in common with the masochism which incubates in the naves of the cathedrals. But it is necessary to tear up the Church by the roots. For this we must take by force all its goods that rightly belong to the people. Religious orders must be dissolved. Bishops and cardinals must be shot.[18]

But as ever, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. In the words of Stanley Payne, one of the few historians of the Spanish Civil War not largely or entirely blinded by anti-Catholic prejudice:

> It was above all the outbreak of violent mass revolution in the Republican zone, with its church burnings, economic appropriations, and many thousands of murders, that quickly rallied the more conservative half of the Spanish population to the Nationalist cause. Almost equally important was the identification of the revolt with religion, which soon began to convert the revolt into an official crusade and provided its primary cultural, emotional, and spiritual support.[19]

The feast of the Assumption was a splendid opportunity to proclaim and confirm the crusade. In a great public ceremony at Sevilla the republican tricolor was lowered and the traditional Spanish gold and red flag raised, and hailed personally by Franco. José María Pemán, the one outstanding Catholic champion among Spanish writers, called the war a new *Reconquista* in

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[18]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 55-56.

[19]Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison WI, 1987), p. 110.

defense of Christian civilization, "a holy war, a crusade."[20] General Mola, speaking on radio that evening, pledged that "the cross that was and remains the symbol of our religion and our faith" would be raised over the new state.[21] At his homily at the Assumption day Mass in Pamplona, following a long and enthusiastic procession through the streets to honor the day, Bishop Olaechea of Pamplona proclaimed:

> This is not a war! This is a crusade! And the Church, while she asks God for peace and the sparing of bloodshed among all her children—those who love her and fight to defend her as well as those who hate her and want to destroy her—cannot do less than put herself on the side of the crusaders.[22]

Writing from Vienna, Alfonso Carlos expressed his particular satisfaction that the requetés were fighting under the banner of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as did the Carlist army of Catalonia far back in 1873 when he had commanded it, and said he trusted that requetés who died fighting in this crusade would be treated by God as martyrs and go straight to Heaven.

At the Alcázar of Toledo and at Simancas barracks in Gijón there could be no Mass on this holy day, because there was no priest. But many prayers were offered; and at the Alcázar the Spanish tradition of fiesta on the great holy days was maintained (one imagines this may have been at the suggestion of the beautiful and vivacious Carmen Aragones) with flamenco dancing and castanets. At the Simancas barracks in Gijón, where the besiegers' attack with flaming gasoline had been thrown back earlier in the day, Colonel Pinilla in a special order of the day con-

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[20]Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: an Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1979), p. 154.

[21]Payne, *Franco Regime*, p. 198.

[22]José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), p. 113.

gratulated his men for their heroic defense, and declared they must fight on to victory or death.

In fact, the end was very near for them. The very next day, at eleven o'clock in the evening, after a tremendous resistance and heavy casualties especially among the officers, during which the indispensable cruiser *Almirante Cervera* was for the time being not available to help them, the remaining defenders of the Zapadores barracks had to abandon them and withdraw to the Simancas barracks. Water, food, and medicines were almost gone, and the Simancas barracks was under almost constant artillery bombardment. On the night of the 19th the *Almirante Cervera* returned and signalled through the darkness with blinking lights; the defenders saw the signal and reopened radio communication with the cruiser. On the 20th six bombs were dropped on the barracks, along with continuing heavy artillery fire which made a large breach in the walls of the barracks compound. One of the four colonels commanding was severely wounded, but Pinilla and the other two fought on.

That night the besiegers brought up a large cannon and emplaced it just 200 yards from the barracks compound, whose walls (unlike those of the Alcázar of Toledo) were never built to take such punishment. When the morning light on the 21st revealed this new and overpowering threat, the defenders, after failing to damage the cannon with their inadequate weapons, sallied against it, but were driven back by withering fire. The shells of this heavy gun and from other cannon only a little further away destroyed large sections of the walls of the compound and of the barracks. A great cloud of dust enveloped the battle. Then the revolutionaries charged in overwhelming numbers and with furious determination. Wooden parts of the barracks blazed up, adding columns of smoke to the dust cloud.

By five o'clock in the afternoon the attackers were inside the barracks in force. One of their officers made a final demand

The Nationalist defenders of Zaragoza, including General Cabanellas' troops and a large detachment of requetés, defeated the anarchists late in August at the Battle of Perdiguera on the road to Zaragoza, again because of the anarchists' military inexperience and frequent refusal to obey orders. In the north, a force of 2,000, consisting primarily of requetés under a very tough and resolute commander, Colonel Beorlegui, attacked the city of Irún on the French border. The defenders of the city numbered 3,000. Normally an attacking force must outnumber defenders to succeed, but Beorlegui slowly pushed forward in defiance of the odds.

On August 16 Lieutenant Barber, engineering officer at the Alcázar of Toledo, listening with a stethoscope through the floor of the west cellar, heard sounds indicating to him that the besiegers were hacking out a tunnel through the solid rock underlying the fortress. In fact two tunnels were being excavated with small dynamite charges expertly placed by militant miners from the Asturias, the province where Gijón was located; other Asturian miners had been among the successful besiegers of the Simancas barracks. On the 19th the first mortar fire began to fall on the Alcázar, and then the first big shells from 155-millimeter cannon. Sixty-eight of these shells struck the Alcázar on the 20th, and their bombardment continued daily, along with 12 air bombs on the 22nd, night attacks on the Gobierno building with flaming gasoline, and incessant rifle fire and grenade-throwing.

But on the 17th the Alcázar garrison, by attaching extra batteries to their radio receiver, was able to pick up a broadcast from Radio Lisbon that for the first time told them of the advance of the Nationalist army through Extremadura toward them. And on the 22nd a Nationalist plane came roaring past, less than a hundred feet above the spires on the four great towers of the Alcázar, and dropped four aluminum containers for them, before going on to drop bombs on positions of the besiegers in the city. The defenders wildly cheered the friendly plane, and cheered even more when in one of the alumnimum containers, along with

food, was found a letter from General Franco wrapped in the old gold and red flag of Spain just adopted by the Nationalists as their banner. He told them: "We are approaching; we shall relieve you. In the meantime, resist! . . . Surmounting all obstacles, our columns are advancing, destroying resistance. *Viva España*! Long live the heroic defenders of the Alcázar!"[27]

The next day, Sunday the 23rd, after the customary prayers in the chapel in lieu of a Mass, the letter was posted in the central courtyard, and the flag was brought there too. Soldiers filed past, knelt, and kissed it, and then it was raised "above the crumbling north wall in the last rays of the setting sun."[28] Each soldier of the garrison was given a buttonhole rosette of gold and red made by the women of the Alcázar out of old Navarra-style berets worn by the cadets at the Academy 25 years before. All that day the mortars pounded away, fifty 155-millimeter shells were fired at the Alcázar, there was another Republican bombing raid, and the digging of the tunnel went on.

That Sunday Luis Moscardó was killed, along with the dean of the cathedral, 12 other priests, 11 Marist brothers, and a number of laymen. Colonel Moscardó"s only surviving son, 16-year-old Carmelo, had been imprisoned with Luis, and he too was marked for death. But at the last moment an anarchist called El Granadino, after killing a priest by smashing his skull with a rifle butt while Carmelo watched, unexpectedly balked at killing one so young. El Granadino took Carmelo Moscardó away to safety in an insane asylum, along with his mother, where they remained until Franco's army reached Toledo.

Late in August the besiegers of the Alcázar brought up a 75-millimeter cannon and placed it in Conception Convent, just 70 yards from the Gobierno building. On August 29 they opened point-blank fire with it. In the course of the day its fire opened a wide breach in the wall of the Gobierno. Posted at this point,

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[27]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, p. 106.
[28]*Ibid.*

Private José Palomares stood his ground. With the wall breaking down before him, half deafened by the explosions of the shells, he climbed a pile of debris and fired repeatedly into the convent with his rifle. This very unequal duel of rifle with cannon ended in victory for the rifleman. Four of the gun crew were seriously wounded and it ceased firing. The Alcázar had a few mortars, but only fifty shells for them. On the 31st Moscardó ordered six of his small stock of mortar shells fired at the Conception Convent and the nearby Santa Cruz Museum, to keep them clear of artillery.

It was toward the end of August that the wife of one of the soldiers of the garrison who had lived in Toledo, and had not brought her into the Alcázar before the siege began, was forced to go into a street near the northwest tower of the fortress and call on her husband to come out and save his family. But observers in the windows of the Alcázar were able to see that at the same time that she said the words she had been required to say, she was signaling to her husband with her fingers that he should stay and fight on. Spanish women have never lagged behind their men in courage.

It was in Catalonia, more than in any other part of Spain, that the revolutionaries who had seized power explicitly proclaimed their goal to be the total extirpation of Christianity by force, and did everything they could to attain that goal. On August 19 the periodical *La Batalla*, published by POUM, the Catalan Trotskyite organization, declared the Republic's proper objective to be "not only to attempt to burn churches and execute ecclesiastics, but to destroy the Church as a social institution."[29] On August 20 the Barcelona newspaper *Worker' Solidarity* declared:

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[29]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, p. 56.

> We have lit the torch, applying the purifying fire to all the monuments which for centuries cast their shadows over every corner of Spain—the churches—and we have crossed the countryside purifying it of the plague of religion.[30]

A touch of awareness of the profundity of the evil that was happening penetrated even the ideological armor of Communist sociologist Franz Borkenau, a former employee of the Comintern, as he reported a scene on a beach at Sitges in Catalonia in this summer month of August:

> The committee had ordered everybody to deliver objects of worship, such as images, statues, prayer books, talismans, to be burned in public. There [to the beach] the women went, carrying their petty objects of devotion, most of them with obvious reluctance, many a one taking a last adieu, with the sad look at what had been, perhaps, an object less of religious value than of family pride, a part of the familiar daily life. There was not the slightest sign that anybody was enjoying the proceeding, with the exception of the children.[31]

In the true spirit of Antoine Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor of the Terror in the French Revolution, who had once demanded that the body of one of his victims who had committed suicide be taken to the guillotine to have its head cut off even though it was dead, the revolutionaries of Catalonia now extended their slaughter to the aged and the severely ill. On August 18 the last two Claretian seminarians, seriously ill in a hospital, were taken out and shot at Barbastro, making a grand total of 51 Claretian martyrs there. That same day seven aged and sick priests and brothers who had been in the hospital at Cervera University were shot by militia.[32] (Another Claretian

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[30]Francisco Lacruz, *El Alzamiento: la revolución y el terror en Barcelona, 1936-1939* (Barcelona, 1943), p. 126.

[31]Sánchez, *Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, p. 54.

[32]Garcia, *Singing into Life*, pp. 84-86; Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, p. 237.

priest at Cervera, Emilio Bover, martyred two nights later, quested the privilege "of kissing the hand of him who is about kill me."[33]

On August 20, at Lérida in Catalonia 75 miles west of B celona, occurred one of the largest mass martyrdoms of the w No less than 74 priests and religious who had been imprisoned its jail, which had a normal holding capacity of 150 but was n jammed with over six hundred prisoners, were taken out at t usual midnight hour by about 200 militia and Assault Guar When their names were called, several heroic requetés and F langists offered to take the places of some of them, but were n allowed to do so. The condemned priests and religious, chain ten together, chanting the Credo and singing "Ave Maria" a the Magnificat, were taken in trucks to the cemetery at the int section of the roads to Tarragona and Barcelona. Many of t 200 militia and Assault Guards cheered as the helpless victi gave up their life's blood under a hail of bullets. In another ma martyrdom in Catalonia on August 25, sixty men were tak from a prison ship in the harbor of Tarragona and machin gunned next to a cemetery fronting a highway. The majority these victims were priests, but they included thirteen requetés.[3

Since Catalonia borders France, it was possible to smugg threatened priests and religious to safety across the border. young layman named Jaime Crivillers Pereda of Vich made practice of this, becoming one of several "scarlet pimpernels" the Spanish revolution.[35] He was captured during August a executed by Barcelona militia on the 27th.

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[33]García, *Singing into Life*, p. 31.

[34]*Ibid.*, p. 63; Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en Espai* pp. 242–246.

[35]So-called from a famous novel by Baroness Orczy about a m using this designation who smuggled aristocrats threatened with t guillotine out of France during the Reign of Terror of the Fren Revolution.

In Madrid another massacre of a large number of prisoners was carried out at this time by the militia, after some of those held in the Model Prison set a fire to try to help them escape, and after much angry talk in the streets about the alleged "massacre at Badajoz" by Yagüe's Nationalist troops earlier in the month. Some Socialist political leaders tried to calm the crowds and control the militia, without success. The Republican government as such did not intervene. Forty prisoners were shot in the courtyard of the Model Prison Sunday afternoon August 23, and thirty more the next morning. Many of them were prominent men. The victims included Fernando Primo de Rivera, brother of José Antonio, and General Villegas who had at first agreed to lead the military uprising in the Montaña barracks, then backed out, then supported the rising when belatedly launched by General Fanjul July 19. President Azaña and Prime Minister Giral were deeply distressed by these killings. Azaña said he wished he was dead and would resign, and was talked out of it only with great difficulty by his friend and confidante, the literary lawyer Angel Ossorio. It is very significant that Azaña was so much disturbed by this murder of national leaders but never voiced any regrets for the slaughter of priests and religious.

On the day of the Model Prison massacre the Giral government legitimized the revolutionary courts, which had authorized many of the killings, but provided that to qualify as agencies of the government they must include two representatives each from the Socialist Workers Party, Largo Caballero's UGT, the Communist Party, the anarchist union CNT, the anarchist party FAI, Azaña's Left Republican Party, and Martínez Barrio's Republican Union. The theory (if there was one) was that the various parties would check one another and thereby prevent indiscriminate massacres. Azaña, with his almost invincible ignorance of the political reality of what Spain had now become, may have actually believed it—for a little while. But if anyone really thought that courts with a revolutionary majority of ten to four

were going to mitigate the horrors sweeping Republican Spain they were very soon disillusioned. Nevertheless, throughout the whole savage and ruinous course of the Spanish Republic under revolutionary control, President (in name only) Manuel Azaña never worked up the moral courage to resign.

All over Spain the martyrdoms continued; it was in August, rather than in July, that they reached their peak. On August 16 in Ciudad Real department at the center of Spain, six priests and 14 brothers of the Brothers of the Christian Schools were killed at Fuente del Fresno. They marched to their death chanting requiem. Their superior, Rev. Victor Chumillas, adjured them to "raise your eyes to Heaven and recite your last Our Father, for in a few minutes you will be in the Kingdom of Heaven." At the end he led them in saying with Christ, "Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do." Six days later the Bishop of Ciudad Real, Narciso de Estènaga Echeverria, was shot; his body was later found near a small village eight kilometers from the city of Ciudad Real, but no details of his martyrdom are known. In the entire persecution 106 priests of this small diocese were martyred, which was almost all of them.[36]

On August 18 fifteen priests and religious were killed near the village of Valdealgoría in the province of Teruel of the diocese of Zaragoza. Like so many of the other martyrs, they pardoned their killers and died shouting "*Viva Cristo Rey!*" Another exceptionally large-scale martyrdom, comparable to that at Lérida on the 20th, took place August 31 at Málaga in the far south, where 60 priests and religious including Enrique Vidaurreta, rector of the Málaga seminary, were taken from prison and killed. On August 28, as on the 9th, two bishops were martyred in a single day: Diego Ventaja Milan, Bishop of Almeria in southeastern Spain, and Manuel Medina, Bishop of Guadix near Granada. Their bodies were burned.[37]

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[36]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 312-313, 402-403, 406.

[37]*Ibid.*, pp. 222, 280-281, 414-415.

However many supporters of the Republic in and out of Spain might try to hide from themselves and others the full magnitude of the horror unleashed there particularly during the month of August, or feebly to justify it as a reaction against "fascism" and excessive Church power in the past, Pope Pius XI understood exactly what was happening. The Church, as so often before in her long history, was under maximum attack from Satan. Within the borders of the Republic her enemies rode high, unchallenged. No earthly, material means remained to defend her, only the sublime courage of the martyrs. The rally of the martyrs had presaged the end of the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution, especially the glorious parade of the sixteen blessed Carmelite sisters of Compiègne to the guillotine in July 1794, singing on their way like the Claretian martyrs of Barbastro. In Spain in 1936 there was a still greater rally of the martyrs, befitting the magnitude of the assault upon Christ and His Church which the actual firing on statues of Christ so clearly betokened.

On August 22 Pope Pius XI granted special permission for the celebration of Mass in secret in Republican Spain, without altar or sacred signs or vessels, with a chalice of glass or pottery, in view of the persecution. Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, in a letter to the general of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary conveying this special permission, assured them that the Pope's heart was with his afflicted sons, who were writing with their blood a glorious new page in the 2,000-year history of Christian martyrdom. He told Cardinal Pacelli to tell them that he shared in spirit their agony and their sacrifice. God was with them, and the Vicar of Christ would never forget them.

This red tide of martyrdom in Spain during August needs to be constantly kept in mind to provide due perspective on the Nationalist execution of Federico Garcia Lorca, probably Spain's

greatest living poet, at the village of Viznar near Granada at dawn August 19, and the extraordinary attention given to it by historians. The famous city of Granada, site of the Alhambra and of the completion of the reconquest of Spain from the Moors in 1492 by the great Isabel and Fernando, was part of the province of Andalusia. Most of Andalusia had been taken over by the Nationalists as a result of Queipo de Llano's remarkably successful coup in Sevilla, though some of its northern and eastern parts and the coastal city of Málaga remained in the hands of the Republic. Queipo had quickly established himself as civil governor of all parts of Andalusia the Nationalists controlled. Franco at this point held no authority not strictly military. This was made very clear when during the week of August 9-15 he made a personal appeal to Queipo to commute the death sentence imposed by a Nationalist court-martial on General Miguel Campins, who had been commander of the Granada garrison and had not supported the military rising. General Campins was a friend of Franco and had done nothing actively to oppose the rising. Nevertheless Queipo "flatly rejected Franco's personal request that the death penalty be reconsidered,"[38] and Campins was executed.

The Nationalist governor of Granada, appointed and supported by Queipo, was José Valdés. At dawn August 16, the day the poet Garcia Lorca was arrested, his brother-in-law Manuel Fernández Montesinos, who had been the Socialist mayor of Granada, was shot at dawn along with 29 others considered important collaborators with the overthrown government. This brought Valdés' total of executions to 236 during less than a month since the rising. The following April, when he had full power, Franco dismissed Valdés from his position because of the excessive number of executions which he had ordered or authorized.[39]

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[38]Payne, *Franco Regime*, p. 212.
[39]Ian Gibson, *The Death of Lorca* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 109, 111.

Garcia Lorca was brought to Valdés' headquarters in Granada in the afternoon of the 16th after being arrested in the home of Luis Rosales, a Falangist but a friend of his, where he had taken refuge a week earlier. (Known as both a political leftist and an open homosexual, Garcia Lorca was well aware that many Nationalists abominated him.) Rosales' vigorous protests about Garcia Lorca's arrest caused him to be fined and dismissed from the Falange. The next morning a servant girl brought food to the poet, delivering it to him in his cell at the prison in Granada government headquarters. She is the last person known to have seen him alive.

On the evening of the 18th Valdés talked with Queipo on the telephone, asking him what he should do about García Lorca. Queipo told Valdés to execute him. No other leading Nationalists knew anything about it—certainly not General Franco, who was in Burgos at the other end of Spain that day, having flown there on Sunday the 16th, the day Garcia Lorca was arrested, to meet with General Mola. Valdés, as was his custom, wasted no time; Garcia Lorca was shot at dawn the very next day. There is no record that he was ever charged with anything, to say nothing of having been convicted by any court.

It was certainly an indefensible crime, for which Valdés and Queipo de Llano share responsibility. But no other Nationalist leader was involved in any way, and at that time there was no functioning Nationalist government. To keep perspective, we should remember the 197 wholly innocent priests killed in the city of Barcelona alone during the last twelve days of July, along with 124 equally innocent who were killed in Madrid during that same period, a combined total of priests alone well in excess of Valdés list of victims in Granada during the month after the rising. Assuredly two wrongs do not make a right. But where was the greater wrong?

On August 24 a new ambassador from the Soviet Union, Marcel Rosenberg, arrived in Madrid. He was accompanied by a sinister and significant figure, Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, who had commanded the Red Guard in Petrograd during the revolution which established Lenin's Communists in power in November 1917, and stormed the Winter Palace. He was now named Soviet consul-general in revolutionary Barcelona. Also included in Ambassador Rosenberg's party was General Jan Pavlovich Berzin, former chief of Soviet military intelligence. On the 30th General Walter Krivitsky, chief of Soviet intelligence in Western Europe, was ordered to begin covert purchase of weapons for the Spanish Republic.

Meeting with Socialist and anarchist leaders around the end of the month, Rosenberg convinced them that to keep the support of most of their friends and sympathizers in the West they needed to seem to maintain the Popular Front government, with supine President Azaña as its titular head (they had been considering a complete overthrow of this government and its replacement by a Largo Caballero dictatorship). But Rosenberg, speaking for his superiors in the Kremlin—Joseph Stalin and his Politburo—fully agreed that Largo Caballero should be actually in charge of the government. Most political leaders in the Republic agreed as well. Even his bitter rival Socialist Indalecio Prieto said on the 26th, in an interview with Russian journalist Mikhail Koltsov:

> My opinion of him [Largo Caballero] is universally known. He is a fool who wants to be clever. He is a disrupter and a bungler who claims to be a methodical bureaucrat. He is a man capable of leading us all to ruin. And yet today he is the only man, or at least the only name, that it would be useful to put at the head of a new government.[40]

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[40]Pierre Broué and Émile Témime, *The Revolution and Civil War in Spain* (Cambridge MA, 1970), p. 193.

It was no ringing endorsement, but a reluctant tribute to the impact of the "Spanish Lenin" and the immense following he had acquired. Speaking in his turn to Koltsov, Largo Caballero stated his intentions and goal with unmistakable clarity: "The workers' parties must sweep away the bureaucrats, the officials, and the ministerial system of work as quickly as possible and move on to new forms of revolutionary control."[41]

By "the ministerial system of work" he evidently meant the whole structure of democratic parliamentary government. Largo Caballero was fully a Communist now, Lenin's faithful disciple, even though he never formally joined the Party, and was later to differ sharply with them (to his cost, not theirs) on policy and strategy. Like Lenin, he scorned elections and individual freedom, as he scorned the Christian Faith. He was about to take over the government of the Spanish Republic and make it exactly what everyone involved in the Nationalist rising had always been sure it would soon become: a vehicle for Communist rule over Spain.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 196.

September

Largo Caballero set up his new government on September 4. Azaña gave his full consent, even after Largo Caballero had set as a non-negotiable condition of accepting the position of Prime Minister that he be permitted to include Communists in his cabinet, which no country other than the Soviet Union and Communist-ruled Mongolia had ever yet done.[1] One of the Communist ministries was, most significantly, Education (the minister was Jesús Hernández); the other was Agriculture, under Vicente Uribe. But there was also a third Communist in Largo Caballero's government, in the highly important position of Foreign Secretary: Julio Alvarez del Vayo, a close and obedient collaborator with the Comintern though not a listed member of the Communist Party. Salvador de Madariaga calls his appointment "a clear sign of the rising power of Moscow in Spanish affairs."[2] Communist Party members Hernández and Uribe accepted their two ministries from Largo Caballero only after being specifically instructed from Moscow to do so. From the time of its establishment the Largo Caballero government was committed to "exaction of revolutionary justice"[3] and recognition of the "people's courts"—in other words, to a continuation of the mas-

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[1]After World War II, the creation of coalition governments with Communist members became the favorite Communist road to power. A notable case of how the takeover process worked, beginning with a coalition cabinet, is furnished by Czechoslovakia, which fell under Communist rule in 1948. Coalition governments with Communist members were demanded repeatedly by Mao Zedong in China and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam.

[2]Salvador de Madariaga, *Spain* (New York, 1943), p. 374.

[3]Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison WI, 1987), p. 235.

sacres and martyrdoms that had reddened the six weeks in Republican Spain since the military rising.

Other important cabinet appointments were Prieto as Minister of Navy and Air and Juan Negrín as Minister of Finance. Largo Caballero had tried to persuade the anarchists to join his government also—not so absurd an idea as at first it appeared, for a substantial section of the anarchists, led by Juan García Oliver, now advocated such participation, however contrary to their theoretical position. At this time the majority of Spanish anarchists and their leaders were not quite ready to do it. But on September 26 anarchists led by García Oliver accepted the ministries of War, Economics, Supply, and Public Health in a new local government in Catalonia set up by the supple Luis Companys.

Largo Caballero called his new regime a "Government of Victory," and named himself as Minister of War as well as Prime Minister. He immediately replaced the exhausted and ineffective General Riquelme in command of the central front (the approaches to Madrid) with José Asensio, just promoted by Largo Caballero to General. The young (44), brilliant Asensio was one of the few regular army officers who had served in Morocco to stay with the Republic. Largo Caballero sent him to meet Yagüe and his Nationalist striking column in the Tagus valley near Talavera de la Reina, which the Nationalists had just taken. Asensio's force was supported by the first foreign volunteers to go into battle for the Republic—Italians and French. After a hard-fought battle Yagüe broke Asensio's men and the inadequately trained volunteers, and they fled the field. But Yagüe's men had suffered significant losses and needed some rest to recover from the rigors of their tremendous march under the summer sun of southern Spain. So the Nationalist advance halted for the time being, though Yagüe did send a detachment north to firm up a link with General Mola's men at Arenas de San Pedro in the Gredos Mountains. Over the next two weeks the main column advanced only 25 miles.

On the Nationalist side, the crusade was more than ever a reality. Just as Communist volunteers from other nations were now arriving to fight for the Republic, Catholic foreign volunteers were arriving to fight for the Catholic Nationalists. The Irish were first in the field on the Catholic side. The leader of the first Irish volunteer battalion, Francis McCullagh, wrote during September to President Eamon de Valera of Ireland:

> I am in Spain, I see Spain around me, I live and move and breathe in the shadow of the greatest horror that has befallen Europe since Sobieski drove the Turk from the gates of Vienna. . . . Not a Spaniard in my company has not had a sister outraged, a father murdered under circumstances of indescribable barbarity, or a brother butchered because he was a priest, or a novice in some monastery. . . . A very striking feature is the number of religious emblems the officers and soldiers wear. Pinned to their breasts are little red cloth badges of the Sacred Heart of a kind very common in Ireland, and holy medals, while around the necks of many hang rosary beads, scapulars of the Virgin del Pilar, and that cross whereon the Reds delight to trample. . . . Never since the Moors were driven from Spain has there been such a Catholic army in this country as there is today. This is not an army; it is the Church Militant on the march. It is Catholic Action personified. This is not a civil war; it is a holy war, a crusade. These are not soldiers; they are fighting monks, Knights Templars. And like all good monks they are cheerful. Never was there such a singing army. Whenever one wakes up at night, one hears the singing soldiers go past. . . . What, then, has caused this extraordinary outburst of piety? In my opinion, the principal cause is the sacrilegious fury of the Reds and their diabolical hatred of the cross of Christ. That fury and that hatred convinced the Catholics of Spain that they had to deal with the forces of Hell itself. . . . The Spanish Catholics were not frightened by the foul and cruel murders which deprived them of their wisest and gentlest counsellors; on the contrary they were strengthened, for many of those victims died like veritable saints of God, and the Catholic army now sees them standing outside the limits of space and time, immortal, invulnerable, far more potent

> than they were on earth, interceding, assisting, encouraging, from the courts of Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Strength.[4]

On September 14, speaking to a group of several hundred Spanish refugees, Pope Pius XI declared that a "truly Satanic hatred of God" had been displayed in the Spanish Republic. What had happened to so many of the Spanish clergy was, he said:

> . . . martyrdom in the full, sacred and glorious meaning of the word; martyrdoms in which were sacrificed the most innocent lives, the lives of old and venerable men, youthful lives still in their flower; martyrdoms of which the victims, in their generous heroism, have gone so far as to ask for a place in the vehicle along with those whom their executioner is taking to their death.[5]

But then he went on, as it is ever a Pope's duty to do, to caution the "defenders of God and religion" in Spain never to forget that their enemies were still their brothers whom they must still try to love, and not to give way to vengeful fury. He may already have heard of the massacres inflicted on helpless prisoners on the Spanish Balearic island of Majorca by the man who curiously emerged as its governor after a Nationalist force took the island from the Republic on September 3—an Italian Fascist officer named Arconovaldo Bonaccorsi, whose bloody reprisals turned the profoundly Catholic French writer Bernanos against the Spanish crusade in his sad book, *The Great Cemeteries under the Moon*.[6] He was in Majorca at this time and never saw any other part of Spain during the Civil War. So the Pope said:

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[4]Francis McCullagh, *In Franco's Spain* (London, 1937), pp. 38, 42-44.

[5]Luis Carreras, *The Glory of Martyred Spain: Notes on the Religious Persecution* (London, 1939), p. 167.

[6]Bernanos was the author of the world-famous *Diary of a Country Priest*.

> It is only too easy for the very ardor and difficulty of defense to go to excess. . . . Intentions less pure, selfish interests, and mere party feeling may easily enter into, cloud, and change the morality and responsibility for what is being done. . . . What is to be said of all these others who also are so near and never cease to be our sons, in spite of the deeds and methods of persecution so odious and cruel against persons and things to us so dear and sacred? [We must] love them with a special love born of mercy and compassion.[7]

At the end of the month, in a pastoral letter entitled "The Two Cities," Bishop Pla y Deniel of Salamanca, in the heart of the Nationalist zone, glorified the recent martyrdoms of bishops, priests, monks, virgins, and children and declared that "Christian civilization and its bases, religion, fatherland and family" must be defended "against those without God and against God,"' and specifically called the war a crusade, as Bishop Olaechea of Pamplona had done the previous month.[8]

The Carlists, above all, had seen the war from the beginning as a crusade and, essentially, nothing else. Their commitment to it remained so complete as to be a marvel to all who observed them. Not for them the disquiet and even exasperation with which some Spanish Nationalists greeted Pope Pius XI's caution against excess and hatred of the enemy in his September 14 allocution to the Spanish refugees. On September 10 the Carlist National War Junta issued a statement firmly asserting Carlist opposition to every form of totalitarianism, including fascism; the new state to be established in Spain, they said, should be limited to essential functions that would not interfere with the just and necessary freedom of the people.[9]

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[7]José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), p. 123.

[8]Payne, *Franco Regime*, p. 199; Sánchez, *Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, p. 153.

[9]Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge, England, 1975), p. 274.

In the course of the month of September the Carlist requetés secured the Basque border town of Irún on the 4th, where heroic Colonel Beorlegui fell mortally wounded in a last engagement with French Communist machine-gunners on International Bridge; on the 13th they took nearby San Sebastian, where they learned that their leading writer and theoretician, Victor Pradera, had just been murdered by his revolutionary captors; on the 16th another requeté force commanded by Luis Redondo took Ronda at the opposite end of Spain, in Andalusia. Bringing his victorious *tercio* to Sevilla a few days later, Redondo dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin Mary in a striking ceremony in the plaza before the residence of Cardinal Segura, who blessed the men and urged them to carry on the crusade. Afterwards the *tercio* entered the great cathedral of Sevilla to venerate the image of the Blessed Virgin carried on the saddle of the canonized crusader King of Castile, St. Fernando III, when he completed the reconquest of Sevilla from the Moors in the year 1248.[10]

At the Alcázar of Toledo the relentless bombardment by the besiegers' 155-millimeter (6-inch) guns began to show substantial effect by the early days of September. With the north wall collapsing into rubble, the cannon were turned in force upon the northeast tower on the 2nd. Two days later it came crashing down, with its crowning spire pointing east from an enormous heap of stones toward the gorge of the Tagus, like a giant's spear. Now the cannon were turned on the northwest tower, while attackers from the Santa Cruz Museum set fire to the already badly damaged Gobierno building, which finally burned down that day. The revolutionary militia occupied it, but in small numbers; it was hardly a safe place to lodge in. Late the following afternoon, the 5th, a brilliant counterattack from the Alcázar led by Captain Vela regained the ruined building, now little more than large piles of ash-covered debris.

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[10]See Redondo's own account of this ceremony in Luis Redondo and Juan de Zavala, *El Requeté: la Tradición no Muere*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona, 1957), p. 473.

On Sunday the 6th another Nationalist airplane appeared overhead, dropping aluminum containers. Two fell into the city and were picked up by the militia, but the third reached the Alcázar. It contained a letter from General Mola stating that the Nationalists were advancing in both the north and the south, and that Yagüe's column had just taken Talavera de la Reina. But this heartening news soon met a grim counterpoint. After an hour of listening at the floor of the Alcázar's lowest cellar with his stethoscope, engineer Lieutenant Barber reported to Moscardó that the enemy was digging not one tunnel under the fortress but two. The excavation was making rapid progress and both tunnels must be expected to reach points directly under the Alcázar in about eight days.

Largo Caballero had not lost confidence in his newly appointed General Asensio despite his defeat near Talavera. He sent him to Toledo to take command of the siege of the Alcázar, with the instruction: "Once and for all the Toledan nightmare must be ended."[1] Asensio's first task was to establish better discipline. So far the siege had mostly been conducted by militia, ardent and brutal but largely untrained. The only Republican general involved had been Riquelme for a few days at the outset of the siege in July, before he went up to the Guadarrama passes, and then again for a few days at the beginning of August before he went south to fight Yagüe. Asensio was a man of determination and ability, though widely suspected of lack of sympathy for the kind of men he mostly had to command in this war—an attitude he later firmly disavowed, though one would wish for the sake of a brave man's reputation that it were true. In any case, Asensio was a formidable opponent, resolved to gain victory at last for the Republic in the long fight at the Alcázar. The day after his arrival the northeast tower fell under the incessant cannon fire, leaving only two of the lofty structures at each corner of

[1] Cecil D. Eby, *The Siege of the Alcázar* (New York, 1965), p. 145.

the square fortress still standing. Horns brayed in triumph in the city, and the immense cloud of dust arising from the ruin covered the sun and coated every exposed surface in the fortress.

At ten-thirty in the evening of the 8th Major Vicente Rojo, an officer serving the government of the Republic who had taught military history at the Alcázar Academy and so was personally known to Moscardó, hailed the Alcázar on a megaphone from the Plaza de Capuchinos on the opposite side of the fortress from the ruins of the Gobierno and the two wrecked towers. He asked for an hour's cease-fire at nine o'clock the following morning so that he might meet with Moscardó. After five minutes of consideration and consultation, Moscardó agreed.

"And do you guarantee my personal safety?" Rojo asked.

Moscardó's inner fire blazed up. Did this man question his word of honor?

"We are gentlemen here," he answered heatedly, "not like your Republican trash. You may have an hour."[12]

Largo Caballero had ordered Major Rojo to undertake these first negotiations with the defenders since the siege began, because the world-wide press attention now being given to the siege and the growing admiration for the magnificent courage of the defenders even among many supporters of the Republic made it desirable at least to try to get the women and children out before the mines were exploded in the tunnels and—as nearly everyone believed they would—totally destroyed the Alcázar. In the morning of the 9th Major Rojo presented terms in writing, signed by "the Defense Committee of Toledo," but obviously authorized by the Communist premier: freedom for the women and children, trial by the "people's courts" for all the fighting men in the garrison. The wives and children at the Alcázar were literally to purchase their lives with the lives of their husbands and fathers, for at this point no reasonable man could doubt for a

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

moment what the verdict of the people's courts on its defenders would be.

The dark eyes burned in Moscardó's haggard face as he received this proposal.

"We are willing to let the Alcázar become a cemetery," he said between his teeth, "but not a dung heap!"[13]

Then he wrote out his official answer on a scrap of paper:

> Concerning the conditions for the surrender of the Alcázar presented by the Committee, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that from the last soldier to the commander they reject said conditions, and will continue to defend the Alcázar and the dignity of Spain to the end.[14]

Major Rojo felt a surge of sympathy and admiration for his old comrade-in-arms rise up and grip his throat. When he entered, Moscardó had refused to shake his hand. Now he had turned his back on him and was walking toward the door of the office of the superintendent of the Academy where they had met. Suddenly Rojo cried out: "Is there anything I can do for you?"

Moscardó turned back, his expression unchanged, his voice unsoftened, utterly unyielding. He was a crusader who had lost his son, and watched the blood of a hundred martyred priests redden the cobblestones of Toledo, the city of saints and the Catholic kings.

"Yes," he said, like steel on iron. "You can send us a priest. We want nothing else from you."[15] And he walked out of the room and closed the door behind him.

Some of the officers of the garrison now crowded around Rojo, whom most of them knew because he had taught there, trying to draw information from him about the plans of the besiegers and the prospects for relief. He told them little, but they

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*

sensed his sympathy. Finally one of them asked him to join them. Rojo cast down his eyes and did not answer immediately. He made no indignant repudiation of the suggestion, no declaration of loyalty to the Republic. Eventually he said: "If I did, this very night my wife and children in Madrid would be killed."[16]

He left his pouch full of fine tobacco for them, and as he was blindfolded preparatory to being led out, he suddenly cried: "*Viva España*!" When he reached the outer gate and the blindfold was removed, his escorts saw that there were tears in his eyes. At the last moment before his departure, he bent over and murmured to Captain Alamán standing beside him: "For the love of God, keep hunting for the entrance to the mines!"[17]

Inside, Moscardó was pacing a corridor, an aide at his side. For a long time he was silent; then he said: "I just can't understand why a man of Major Rojo's integrity did not remain with us." The aide said nothing. Minutes later Moscardó burst out again: "Do you think it would have been proper if I had shaken his hand? I wanted to do it, but I couldn't."[18]

At the post office Rojo handed over to Major Luis Barceló, head of the Defense Committee, the scrap of paper containing Moscardó"s defiant reply to the surrender terms. Barceló was a maximal revolutionary; he had been in charge of the execution of the Nationalist officers captured at the Carabanchel Barracks in Madrid in July, and at the end of the war was to fight his own commander, Colonel Sigismundo Casado, for days when ordered to surrender Madrid, until Casado captured and shot him. Flushing with anger as he read Moscardó's words, Barceló lunged for the nearest telephone. "Artillery batteries? Good. This is Major Barceló. Fire night and day on the Alcázar! Erase it! Leave no stone larger than my little finger!"[19]

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

At 10:45 in the morning the artillery fire resumed. At almost that very moment the wife of one of the soldiers of the garrison, named Valero, gave birth to her first child on a table in the electrician's workshop in the north cellar. He was named Restituto Alcázar Valero, the Castle Restored.

The next evening at ten o'clock the besiegers of the Alcázar sent another message by megaphone to the defenders. Major Rojo had arranged to honor Colonel Moscardó's one request. The next morning a priest would visit them as they had asked.

Canon Enrique Vázquez Camarasa was no ordinary priest. Formerly attached to the cathedral of Madrid (whence his title of "Canon"), his reputation as one of the most "progressive" clergymen in Spain had saved him from the fate of hundreds of his brother priests in the capital city. If he ever helped or interceded for any of them or expressed any regret for their fate, history has not recorded it. Approaching the Alcázar, where he was met by Major Barceló, he exchanged the revolutionary clenched-fist salute with the militia on the battle lines. His instructions were to take advantage of every possible opportunity to persuade the garrison to surrender.

At the Bisagra Gate of the fortress Canon Camarasa was met by Captain Sanz de Diego, who had been acting in the place of a priest for the garrison, since they had none. He had lost an eye to a shrapnel wound suffered while conducting a funeral service. He conveyed Colonel Moscardó's word that Camarasa would not be harmed and would be allowed to leave within three hours. Then he blindfolded him and led him inside the building, where he took him roughly by the shoulders, shook him a little, and said, "Can you say Mass?" Frightened by the physical contact, Camarasa muttered, "All right, if you wish." Sensing his fear, one of the men standing nearby said, with a twist of his lips, "Don't worry. It's only that crowd out there that murders priests." Since Camarasa had just been hailed by "that crowd out there," that thrust struck home.

The defenders of the Alcázar of Toledo were not fools. They knew very well what kind of priest would be the only priest allowed by their besiegers to visit them. Some of them surely recalled—for Spaniards know their own extraordinary history vividly—how more than a thousand years before, King Pelayo, standing at Covadonga with his back literally to the wall, a giant rock wall hundreds of feet high, ruling a realm twenty miles by twenty facing an empire that stretched from his valley to the borders of China, was urged by a bishop named Oppas to surrender because his prospects were hopeless and he would "enjoy many benefits alongside the Moors," and how Pelayo had answered him: "*Our hope is in Christ!* This little mountain will be the salvation of Spain."[20] Here was the new Bishop Oppas, and they intended to give him the same answer Pelayo had given Oppas. But it was not for this that they had brought a priest into their stronghold.

Camarasa was taken to meet Colonel Moscardó in his office. Major Rojo had known what manner of man he was dealing with; Camarasa did not. He began a monologue about the happy life in Madrid. Yes, it was true that all the churches were closed, but at least they were no longer being burned down. Priests loyal to the government were quite safe; why, his own house was protected by an anarchist guard! There was plenty of food and water.

The contempt Moscardó felt must have been almost tangible. But it was contempt for the man, combined—as only a true Catholic can combine it—with reverence for the office and the powers he held from Christ, despite collaborating with His enemies. Soon the crusader commander had had more than enough of Camarasa's talk.

"Did you come prepared to confess us and celebrate Holy Mass?" Moscardó demanded. "That's all we want!"[21]

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[20]See Chapter One, "Winter," Footnote 1.

[21]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, p. 155.

Camarasa nodded dumbly.

At the southeast corner of the cellar an altar had been prepared, its platform covered with a rich carpet upon which the royal arms were stitched in purple and gold. The only light came from the dim and flickering animal-fat lamps. The homily was Camarasa's opportunity. He expounded at length on the hopelessness of their struggle. In a few days, if they did not surrender, the Alcázar would be blown to bits, and all of them with it. God would judge the men who allowed this to happen as the murderers of the women and children who would die in the explosion.

He went on and on in this vein. Some of the women began to sob. Some of the men were shaken. He talked so long that he had no time to hear individual confessions, but could only give a general absolution. But he did finally say the Mass, baptized Restituto Alcázar Valero, and brought Holy Communion to the seriously wounded lying in the infirmary.

Then he went again to Moscardó's office, asking to speak with him privately. He pressed the argument that he was sacrificing the women and children to his own stubbornness and vanity. Even if he would not surrender himself, he should let the women and children go. Surely they wanted to!

"No, señor," Moscardó said. Then, his voice rising as Camarasa went on: "No, señor. *No*, señor!"[22]

Unable to penetrate the crusader's armor, Camarasa now began implying that he was keeping the women and children in the Alcázar by force. Moscardó called in Carmen Romero de Salamanca, daughter of one of his principal officers and wife of a Civil Guard lieutenant of the garrison, and told her this priest was saying that the women of the Alcázar were being held there against their will. All the fire of the mothers and wives of the

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[22]*Ibid.*, p. 156. Officers standing outside his door heard his repeated exclamation of these two words.

men who fought 722 years to reconquer Spain from the infidel was in her answer:

> *Hold here?* That's a lie! I have talked with every woman in the Alcázar and all of them think as I do. Either we will leave here free, with our men and children, or else we will die with them in the ruins![23]

After that, there was nothing more to be said. Moscardó coldly ordered Camarasa escorted out.

Two weeks later, Canon Vázquez Camarasa left Spain forever and showed up in France, where he told a newspaper reporter that he had played no part in "Spanish politics." Six months later, in Paris, he wrote an article stating that his proposal to Moscardó to evacuate the women and children from the Alcázar was entirely his own idea. (Since Largo Caballero was known to have been trying hard to get the women and children out, this self-serving declaration was, to say the least, open to serious doubt.) Camarasa also said he admired the heroism of the defenders of the Alcázar. He survived the war in Nazi-occupied France and died in 1946, despised by both sides—the ancient fate of traitors.

But he had said the only Mass celebrated in the Alcázar of Toledo during all the days of its siege, and that is what men remembered. For many years, so long as General Franco lived and ruled, the site was marked by a plaque in the cellar corner where the Mass was said, reading: "Here the Divine King visited our heroes."[24]

On September 13 the Chilean ambassador obtained permission from the government to make a last attempt to persuade the defenders of the Alcázar to surrender. After five hours of argu-

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[24] I observed this plaque on visits to the Alcázar of Toledo in 1971, 1973, 1974, and 1975.

ment he induced Major Barceló and his "Defense Committee" to guarantee the lives of all the garrison if they surrendered for whatever their reluctant promise was worth. It did not matter, because Colonel Moscardó refused to receive the ambassador, believing that any further peace negotiations at this critical moment would break the morale of the garrison, shaken by the steady approach of the tunnels which they had no way to stop.

The next day the two tunnels reached the walls of the Alcázar, and the sounds of the miners could be heard by everyone beneath the cellar floor; no longer did Lieutenant Barber need his stethoscope. Moscardó moved everything away from this part of the cellar, strung barbed wire around it, and set up a small chapel with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the edge of the wire. Outside the militia chanted, over and over: "Send out the women: *it will soon be too late*! Send out the women: *it will soon be too late*!"[25]

On the 15th a four-hour bombardment of the Alcázar produced a long vertical split in the east wall. Five of the garrison were killed and four wounded, bringing its total casualties to more than forty killed and over 200 wounded.[26] During the bombardment the defenders could clearly hear the miners enlarging the tunnels below them. Lieutenant Barber tried to make a countermine, but his men were too debilitated by the poor food and lack of sleep for nearly two months to be able to make significant progress into the hard rock with no miners' explosive charges available. Through the day of the 16th small detonations continued in one of the mines, but none were heard from the other, causing Lieutenant Barber to conclude that it had been completed. About noon Nationalist bombers struck the city, showing the defenders they were not forgotten. That night, under the shadow of the impending detonation of the mines, Lieu-

[25]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, p. 164.
[26]*Ibid.*, p. 158.

tenant Fernando Barrientos deserted. He was the only officer to desert the Alcázar during the siege. It did him no good. A militia patrol in the city picked him up, "tried" him on the spot, and shot him.

By sundown September 17 all sounds of movement and activity under the Alcázar had ceased. The mines were ready, each of the two tunnels packed at its head with two and a half tons of TNT. Newsmen from all over the world, encouraged to come by Largo Caballero's government, had gathered to see the explosion which would bring down the battered fortress. Major Barceló, fearing that a large part of the city might be damaged when the Alcázar was destroyed, was trying to evacuate all the remaining inhabitants, but many refused to go. Two attack columns were designated to strike the Alcázar ten minutes after the explosion and overwhelm any surviving defenders.

It was still summer on the high plains of Castile, and the night was warm, especially in the cellars of the Alcázar into which the day's heat had penetrated through the gaping holes left by the constant shellfire. In his windowless room in the center, Colonel Moscardó bent over his daily log of the siege, barely able to see it by the faint flickering light of the little lamp fed only by the stinking fat of the horse they had killed that day for meat. Moscardó's tall gaunt bearded figure could have sat for one of the world-famous portraits of Toledo's supreme artist, El Greco, with his strange elongated faces and forms. The guttering light threw the shadow of Moscardó's head and shoulders on the wall like some dying giant.

He was totally alone. The Alcázar was deathly silent. Beneath his feet, five tons of high explosive waited for detonation.

Moscardó had finished his entry in the log. His pen hovered over the paper, and he lowered it to write one last sentence.

"All things possible having been done, we now commend ourselves to God."[27] It was what he had told his son Luis to do

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

in the face of certain death. Under the words he drew a thick black line.

"Having done all, to stand!" St. Paul had written to the Ephesians.

Eight hundred and thirty years before the siege of the Alcázar of Toledo in 1936, Raymond of Toulouse, the supreme crusader, who led his men to Jerusalem when all others had given up, and took the holy city for Christ his Lord and King by storm in the year 1099, had suffered mortal wounds when a burning roof fell on him in Castle Pilgrim which he had built, under siege by the Muslims. Presuming he reached the Heaven he sought, perhaps Raymond of Toulouse asked God that night for the lives of José Moscardó and his crusaders.

At 6:18 in the morning all firing on the Alcázar stopped. Everyone inside and outside it knew what that meant. The next thirteen minutes crawled by on leaden feet.

At 6:31 the mine on the southwest side of the Alcázar exploded with a thunderous roar heard in Madrid, forty miles away. The southwest tower, a hundred feet high, rose up toward the sky like a rocket, then crashed to earth in a gigantic stone avalanche. A nearby truck was hurled five hundred feet into the air; its engine tore loose from the truck body and fell through the roof of a house half a mile away. The whole city of Toledo disappeared from view in an enormous roiling cloud of black smoke.

At 6:45 the main attack column headed by 600 picked Assault Guards charged from Zocodover Square shouting, "We've killed the dogs! At them!"[28] Where the long-defended walls had been, they found great mounds and masses of rubble. Looking for ways through them, sure of their victory, suddenly they heard a totally unexpected sound ahead of them: the high clear notes of a bugle.

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[28] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

The fifteen-year-old trumpeter of the Alcázar was sounding the call to arms.

Within, the shock and the deafening roar must have been, for the first minute or two, totally paralyzing. But then, in every part of the cellars where the defenders had stayed that terrible night, they opened their eyes, looked around them, and saw that they were still alive—and so were almost all of their *compañeros* and even a newcomer, a baby girl delivered immediately after the explosion, and named Josefa del Milagro (Josefa of the miracle). The enormous adamantine crag upon which Toledo is built had proved tougher than anyone had imagined, confining the effects of the explosion to the area immediately above the mine. (A later count showed that only five of the garrison died in the explosion—and the second mine, in the northeast quadrant, never did go off.) First scattered, then growing to a crescendo, came shouts of "*Viva Cristo Rey!*"

The officers, knowing an attack must come quickly, ordered the bugler to blow and sent the men to their posts—or to where their posts had been, since no one yet knew what was left outside. Rushing through the courtyard, some of the defenders stopped in shock and horror at the sight of what appeared to be two severed heads in the middle of it. But they were not severed; they belonged to Teresa González the meat dresser and her husband, buried up to their necks in rubble but miraculously only slightly injured. Teresa cried out heroically to them, "Don't bother with me! The Reds are attacking!"[29] And so the defenders ran past her to their posts.

Below, in the cellars, next to the smoking crater where the mine had exploded, several of the women hurried to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary which Colonel Moscardó had put there. Her statue had been blown over, but was only slightly chipped. They knelt in prayer to thank her for their deliverance. Soon Moscardó himself joined them there.

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

Above, the revolutionary assault force, still struggling to penetrate the piles of rubble, saw the defenders appear above them, sighting and firing their rifles with deadly accuracy, hurling grenades down the jumbled slope of stone. Amazed by their survival, the attackers hesitated and fell back, waiting for reinforcements, while the defenders swiftly began building barricades (nothing was easier, with rock fragments everywhere) to cover the openings in the rubble. When a tank emerged from behind the Santa Cruz Museum, rumbled across Zocodover Square, and smashed the iron gate of the Alcázar, knocking over a truck beyond loaded with stones, the defenders responded with one of their few bombs. The tank was undamaged, but its startled crew backed it away; in any case it was not clear that there was room for it to get through the rubble.

Meanwhile the other column of attackers was ambushed by three defenders with a machine gun and stopped in its tracks. But a group of about a dozen men found a blind spot, entered the Alcázar on the second floor from outside, and opened fire on the defenders below, raising a red banner on a girder. The effects of the explosion had left the defenders no access to the second floor; but if they could not somehow dislodge these men from their apparently impregnable position, the Alcázar was doomed.

Lieutenant Benito Gómez Olivares, commanding in the room below, took charge. Its ceiling, which was the floor of the second storey, had several large holes in it due to shellfire and the mine explosion, but they were 25 feet above him; the longest ladders in the Alcázar were barely half that length. Gómez Olivares lashed sets of two ladders together, set them against several of the holes, and led his men in climbing them, the ladders (never designed for such use) twisting and bending under their weight. But they stayed up; Gómez Olivares and his men emerged shooting on the second floor, killed all but two of the attackers, and tore down the red flag from the girder.

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It was 10:20 in the morning of September 18, and the Alcázar of Toledo still held out.

In their fury the besiegers fired 272 shells during the rest of that day, the most of any day in the siege. The cannonade continued on into the night. Moscardó and Lieutenant Barber surveyed the damage: the explosion had been concentrated in one place and most of the fall of stones had been in the west, away from the interior. There was little damage underground outside the area directly over the end of the tunnel which Moscardó had enclosed in barbed wire. That night the defenders were served a special festive meal, luxurious for them, of rice, beans, and sausage. It was much cooler; there was a touch of autumn in the air.

In revolutionary-controlled Spain the martyrdoms continued through September. Fourteen more Claretian seminarians died as martyrs; taken from the killing ground of Ciudad Real and sent under guard by train to Madrid, they were dragged off the train at a town called Fernán Caballero where the militia, urged on by a diabolical woman who marked each for death by a kiss, shot them all while their guard watched. Ten more priests were killed at a cemetery in Ciudad Real later in the month. On September 10, Rev. Salvador Maces Chova, a parish priest in Valencia department, arrested and tortured the previous day in an unsuccessful attempt to make him deny Christ, was shot in the street at dawn, but did not die immediately. He lay there for two hours calling for water which no passer-by would give him, until he died breathing the Name of Jesus.[30]

On September 16, facing immediate martyrdom, Rev. Andrés Molina, pastor of a parish in Almeria department, wrote a last letter to his family:

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[30]Antonio Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 297-298, 313, 601.

> I prefer that they kill me before I should deny our holy religion, and I hope in Our Lord Jesus Christ and our Mother the Most Holy Virgin, that they will give me strength to give my life for God . . . Dearest mother and dearest brothers and sisters, do not be distressed because I have been killed; on the contrary, give many thanks to Our Lord because he has chosen me to be a martyr. From Heaven I will pray for all of you and for your family, and if here, in this present life, I cannot embrace you, in Heaven I will wait to give you an eternal embrace, and triumph and find eternal joy with Our Lord, the Most Holy Virgin and all the chosen saints.[31]

There were thousands of lay martyrs as well, not as carefully numbered and thoroughly researched as the martyrs who were clergy and religious. Arrested on September 12 in Lérida, Francisco Castello Aléu, 19, a holy young man devoted to Catholic action, told his captors:

> If to be a Catholic is a crime, I accept with pleasure my delinquency, since the greatest happiness a man can find in this world is to die for Christ. If I had a thousand lives I would give them without a moment's doubt for this cause.[32]

The next night the militia shot Castello Aléu at a cemetery.

On September 15, at the small town of Pozoblanco in Córdoba department, Teresa Cejuda, who had been president of a group of Women for Catholic Action and worked closely with the Salesians, and had offered herself as a victim to help save Spain, was shot with 20 men and three other women. At her trial Teresa had declared that she was concerned neither with politics nor with capitalism, but only with proclaiming the truths of Christianity. Hearing this, her lawyer declared he could no longer defend one whose ideas so contradicted those of the Largo Caballero government. On September 24 Nationalist air

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 612.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 547.

raids on Málaga following a Nationalist naval victory in the Straits of Gibraltar led to another mass reprisal killing of about 120, including 15 priests and religious and eight laywomen, the others being laymen.[33]

Catalonia continued to take the lead in killings of both clergy and Catholic laity. By the end of September more than 600 priests, religious, and seminarians had been killed in the archdiocese of Barcelona alone.[34] One especially Satanic episode occurred at the village of Riudarenos near Gerona in Catalonia on September 22, where three members of the Bosch Massó family—a man and two women—were condemned to death. One of the women was a nun. Her brother, Carlos, asked to be killed first so that he would not have to witness the death of his sisters. His eyes were gouged out, then all three were horribly slaughtered.[35] On September 24 Barcelona militia killed the entire family of Placido Armengol, a devoutly Catholic baker in the city: Placido, his wife, his three sons (all in their twenties), and a young man who tried to intercede for them.[36]

On September 18, in the Kremlin, the Executive Committee of the Comintern met to consider how it would deal with the Spanish Civil War. Its one-time leader Zinoviev had been shot less than a month before, with his long-time ally Kamenev the first top Party leaders executed in Stalin's great Party purge. The Soviet members were fearful and hesitant to speak up or take any strong action until they had a better understanding of what Stalin intended and desired. But Georgi Dimitrov, the fiercely brilliant Bulgarian who was secretary-general of the Comintern, did not feel threatened; indeed, he retained Stalin's full confidence and

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[33]*Ibid.*, pp. 282-283, 558-559.

[34]Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1986), p. 102n.

[35]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, p. 526.

[36]Francisco Lacruz, *El Alzamiento; la revolución y el terror en Barcelona, 1936-1939* (Barcelona, 1943), pp. 179-180.

support until his death many years later—something not easy to do. The Spanish delegate explained that the Communist Party in Spain was working hard to introduce greater discipline to the Spanish revolution, actively supporting Largo Caballero's efforts to establish a unified military command to which the fractious militia would be subjected. He said that "a revolutionary reshaping of agrarian relations"[37] would come to Spain in the near future, but the illusion of a Popular Front government must be maintained.

Dimitrov agreed. The state which would emerge from a Republican victory in the civil war, he said, anticipating the official designations of the Communist-ruled nations of Eastern Europe after World War II, would not be a democratic republic but "a special state with genuine people's democracy" which would be supported by substantial elements on the Left which were outside the Communist Party. This polity would be, he said, "a special form of democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry."[38] To attain victory, the unified military command the Spanish Communists were supporting was indispensable. Though some Comintern members complained that the Spanish Communist Party was not yet playing a sufficiently leading role in the Republic, Palmiro Togliatti, head of the Italian Communist Party, had no use for such concerns. The "Spanish Revolution," he declared, was "the greatest event since October 1917 in the history of the struggle for liberation."[39] As David Cattell states:

> It should be noted that the conditions under which the Communists entered the [Largo Caballero] government corresponded very closely to the prerequisites set down by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935 for the formation of a Popular Front government: (1) the breakdown of

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[37]E. H. Carr, *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Tamara Deutscher (New York, 1984), p. 20.

[38]*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 21.

the old bourgeois state, (2) the masses in revolt against fascism, and (3) the Socialists and other workers' groups actively fighting the fascists and reactionaries.[40]

Just two days after the Comintern meeting on Spain, Largo Caballero's government formally decreed the unification into a single body of all internal security forces in the Republic, including the Assault Guards, the Civil Guards, the former security police, and the "rear vigilance militias" which had been doing most of the killing of civilians. On September 22 French Communist Party leader Maurice Thorez flew to Moscow to make a personal appeal for the greatest possible amount of Soviet aid for the Spanish Republic but also for the formal organization and training of units of Communist military volunteers under the authority of the Comintern. His proposal was quickly accepted, leading to the establishment of the famous International Brigades the following month.

At the Alcázar of Toledo in the last part of September the fight went on, the besiegers still as determined on victory as the besieged despite the spectacular failure of their heralded mine. The ruined Gobierno building was now almost untenable, though still held by a remnant of heroes from the garrison. Their last center of resistance, called the "room of death" because no defender left it unless he was dead or wounded, was regularly raked by machine-gun fire. In the dark hours before the dawn of Sunday, September 20 the attackers brought up a gasoline truck to try to set what was left of the building afire, as they had done before. A long irrigation hose was run from the tanker truck, but a defender climbed out of a window in the Gobierno and cut it open with the stroke of a machete. The gasoline caught fire and burned back toward the attackers instead of the Gobierno build-

[40]David T. Cattell, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War* (Berkeley CA, 1955), pp. 55-56.

ing. At dawn the militia attacked. Dynamite charges laid by the Asturian miners knocked down more of the wall in front of the Gobierno. More gasoline was brought up in buckets and bottles and ignited. The defenders refused to retreat. They found that a passageway through the ruins leading to their position was so situated as to silhouette attackers against the morning sun behind them. One after another these illuminated targets were cut down. The Gobierno held out until nightfall, when it was finally abandoned.

At 9:30 in the morning of the 20th a massive new attack was launched on the Alcázar, with a tank in support. The tank climbed slowly up the steep zigzag road to the north terrace, with militia coming behind it. About 25 of the garrison faced it, with only a three-inch gun which had not fired a live round in twenty years, and a handful of grenades. But the zigzag road was choked with rubble from the tower destroyed in the mine explosion, pushing the front of the tank up to a 45-degree angle. Its treads began to slip on the jumbled stones. Twice it slid back; each time it came on again. On the third try it almost reached the top, but then hit a steel girder from the tower ruins and came to a dead stop. Colonel Romero de Salamanca, whose spirited daughter Carmen had told Canon Camarasa that he was lying if he said any woman in the Alcázar wanted to leave it and surrender, ordered gasoline bottles and grenades flung down upon the stopped tank. Under this deadly hail it backed down the slope of rock, then all the way down to the bottom of the zigzag road. With their armored protection gone, the militia stood exposed. The 25 defenders fixed bayonets and charged, and the militia fled.

That night Largo Caballero himself arrived at Toledo, demanding that it be taken within 24 hours, and calling on Communist units to participate in the assault. Carrying red hammer and sickle flags, they attacked the next day, following the col-

lapse under bombardment of the last of the four 100-foot towers of the Alcázar. But they accomplished nothing.[41]

That was the day—September 21—that General Franco decided that his main army advancing on Madrid must go first to relieve the Alcázar of Toledo. General Alfredo Kindelán recalls discussing that decision with Franco:

> "Do you know, General, that Toledo could cost us Madrid?" said Kindelán.
>
> "Yes, I know," answered Franco. "I have long meditated on the consequences of my decision. . . . In my place, what would you do?"
>
> "I," Kindelán replied without hesitating, "would go for Toledo even if it meant not taking Madrid."
>
> "Well, that's what I have decided," answered Franco, "because I have come to appreciate that in all wars, and above all in civil wars, spiritual factors count to an extraordinary degree. We have to impress the enemy by convincing him that *whatever we propose to do, we achieve*, and they can't do anything to stop it. Moreover, I hope that a delay of eight days in the march on Madrid will not bring the consequences you fear. But even if it should, I would not give up the idea of conquering Toledo and liberating the heroic defenders of the Alcázar, which I promised them I would do in my message that was dropped by air."[42]

He meant the message of August 22, which had given the garrison its first ray of hope for rescue.

Though there are persistent reports that Colonel Yagüe was strongly opposed to this decision and even asked to be relieved of command because of it, and though in fact he was relieved that day of command of the column marching toward Toledo and

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[41]Photographs of this Communist assault with the red hammer and sickle flags were displayed at the restored Alcázar of Toledo during General Franco's lifetime, where I personally observed them. They were removed after he died.

[42]Brian Crozier, *Franco, a Biographical History* (Boston, 1967), p. 207.

Madrid, there is no solid evidence that this was the reason for Yagüe's relief. The official story was that he had fallen ill as a result of the rigors and strains of his tremendous march. He did have a heart problem, and this could have been true; however, we know that he spent the next ten days hard at work gaining support among the officers for the proposal to make Franco supreme commander, which does not sound as though he was very sick or had just been dismissed by Franco. His successor in command of the column was General José Varela, who had been so helpful to the Carlists in organizing and training their requetés during the past three years.

On September 23 Franco gave Varela six days to relieve the Alcázar of Toledo, and he began his advance toward it at once. That day the besiegers made another tank and militia attack up the zigzag drive; it failed in almost exactly the same way as the earlier tank attack there. In the cold clear dawn of Friday the 25th, the defenders heard a distant rumble of artillery fire to the westward, and from the direction knew at once that it was the Nationalists approaching. One of them cried out: "The Alcázar for the Holy Virgin!"[43] Others wept for joy, or fell to their knees with prayers of thanksgiving. Later in the day a Nationalist plane bombed Toledo, and the garrison watched militia retreating past the city toward Madrid, fleeing from Franco's army.

But the struggle was not yet over. The militia in the city had plunged so deep into ultimate evil that few had the strength or grace to draw out of it; most simply intensified their commitment to their hate-filled cause. On Saturday the 26th Varela's men cut the road from Toledo to Madrid, and there were aerial dogfights over the Alcázar. The pilots of Nationalist planes were machine-gunned while hanging helplessly in their parachutes; one who landed alive was tortured for seven hours, cut up with razors, and beaten and trampled until his body was "a mass of bleeding pulp."[44] At the last moment his life was saved when it

[43]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, p. 199.
[44]*Ibid.*, p. 201.

was learned that he was the brother of a prominent anarchist in Madrid. Word of his fate soon came back to the Nationalist soldiers and airmen. It did not make them more merciful.

At dawn Sunday the 27th a second mine was detonated under the Alcázar, but this time at an open space at the northeast corner. This mine was smaller than its predecessor because it had been more quickly constructed, and contained "only" one ton of TNT. Its explosion, like that of the first mine, was visually spectacular; General Varela and his officers, seeing it from afar, believed that at the last moment the besiegers had won. But many of the attacking militia literally fell into the open crater the mine had made, where they were easy targets for the rifles and machine guns of the defenders. The attackers sprayed and ignited gasoline, but there was almost nothing left around them but heaps of stone, and stone does not burn. After a two-hour battle the defenders won again, giving the lie to the government's announcement that day that the Alcázar had fallen.

Later that morning, seeing Varela's army "massing on the long barren hills to the north,"[45] the garrison tied their gold and red Spanish traditional flag on a steel girder at the top of the pile of rubble in the northwest corner where the tower overthrown by the first mine had come down, and Colonel Romero de Salamanca and his men had twice driven back an attacking tank. The Republicans in Toledo now began to flee, including the governor. Furious, dedicated Major Barceló would not leave, but fewer and fewer of his men would now obey him. At noon Varela attacked, the militia running before him. At 6:40 in the evening Lieutenant Lahuerta and 20 Moroccans, having entered the city through an undefended back gate, reached the Alcázar, followed five minutes later by Captain Teide and 20 Spanish Legionnaires. Others of the relieving army were not far behind. Captain Aguilera later told Arnold Lunn of how he first met Carmen Aragones, the beautiful heroine of the garrison, that very

[45]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 412.

night. Coming down into the cellar, he first caught sight of her and her children by the light of a match. "She glanced up as the match flickered in the gloom, and I shan't forget the darkness of her eyes or the deathlike pallor of her face."[46]

The next morning, the 28th, as the last pockets of resistance by the revolutionaries in the city were being mopped up by the relieving army, General Varela entered the Alcázar with Father Pujal, a Jesuit, who had been selected to say the first Mass there since Canon Camarasa's. Colonel Moscardó stepped forward and saluted, saying: "My general, there is nothing new in the Alcázar." He was then told for the first time of the death of his sons Luis in Toledo and Pepe in Catalonia. He fell to his knees in shock, saying: "Is this the price of glory?"[47] He was reunited with his wife and his one surviving son, Carmelo; when he and his wife met, their faces were so ravaged by suffering that they had difficulty recognizing each other. Father Pujal said Mass, and Cardinal Gomá, Archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain, sent a message from his refuge in Pamplona hailing the triumph of the martyrs and the spirit of the crusade:

> Toledans: Our city and diocese have paid an enormous tribute of priestly lives. It is a glory and an infamy, Spaniards! It is a glory because if our enemies have known how to kill, our priests have known how to die. In the clash of civilization with barbarism, of Hell against Christ, they had to succumb first, because mortal blows aim for the heart, the champions of Christian civilization, the banner-bearers of Christ. Joined with them have fallen men most representative of Spanish Catholicism. But among our sacrificed priests there has not been one single defection. What is more, history will sing with an epic note the sublime episodes in many of these deaths. Glory to the martyrs! Honor to the Church which has such ministers![48]

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[46]Arnold Lunn, *Spanish Rehearsal* (New York, 1937), p. 81.

[47]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, pp. 214-215.

[48]Anastasio Granados, *El cardenal Gomá, primado de España* (Madrid, 1969), p. 91. Not a single historian writing in English of the

On the next day, the 29th, General Franco came to the Alcázar, saluted the gold and red flag tied to the girder, and was greeted by Moscardó, who told him: "You will find the Alcázar destroyed but its honor intact." Franco embraced him; pinned on his chest the Cross of San Fernando, Spain's highest decoration for valor; promoted him on the spot to General; and declared him worthy to stand among the greatest heroes of Spanish history. Never were accolades more richly deserved. Franco expressed a wish to see the cellars, where the defenders had lived all through the two months of the siege. He was led down into them. As he walked through, he heard a man delirious from his wounds crying out incessantly: "They attack! Don't let them in! To the guns!"[49]

This was the summit of the last crusade. In some ways it meant even more than the final victory. An epic had been wrought whose memory will live, at least in some bold Catholic hearts, until the end of time. In the blackest night of persecution, of apostasy and betrayal, of hope unfulfilled, of the sun of justice darkened, of Christ's Church hidden and forlorn, they can always hear the deathless words of José Moscardó: "The Alcázar will *never* surrender!"

On September 28, the day after the relief of the Alcázar of Toledo, when the news of it had spread throughout Europe and the world, Alfonso Carlos at his desk in Vienna pulled out his writing paper and penned a letter to Manuel Fal Conde voicing his "inexpressible joy" in the "heroic defenders of the Alcázar" and their "valiant liberators."[50]

Spanish Civil War known to me has seen fit to translate and quote this magnificent tribute to the martyrs by Cardinal Gomá. To the best of my knowledge this is the first translation of it ever made into English.

[49]Eby, *Siege of the Alcázar*, p. 216 for both quotations in this paragraph.

[50]Alfonso Carlos to Manuel Fal Conde, Sept. 28, 1936, in Melchor Ferrer, ed., *Documentos de Alfonso Carlos de Borbón y Austria-Este* (Madrid, 1950), p. 318.

These were his last recorded words. Shortly after writing them, he stepped out into the street, and failed to see an Austrian army vehicle hurtling toward him. It struck him, and a few minutes later he died.

The apparently indestructible 87-year-old king claimant and mentor of the Carlists, their champion for no less than 65 years, was gone. What neither bodily ills nor enemy bullets could do, a street accident finally accomplished. All men must die, even such a man as this; but it seems especially sad that after having lived so very long, Alfonso Carlos did not live just two and a half years more to see the final triumph of the heroic young men he had reached across two full generations to inspire. His widow, ever-faithful Maria de las Nieves (Mary of the Snows), continued to speak out to and for the Carlists during the years that still remained to her.

On September 21, the day Franco decided that he must relieve the Alcázar of Toledo before completing his march to Madrid, the principal Nationalist officers met at an estate near the airfield at Salamanca at the invitation of the commander of the Air Force, General Alfredo Kindelán, to designate a supreme commander. General Cabanellas alone voiced opposition; there were two forms of military rule, he said—a supreme commander or a council (*junta*). Kindelán agreed that those were the two ways. "with the first,"he said, "you win; with the second you lose." Though most of the generals present agreed that there should be one supreme commander and that he should be Franco, no final decision was then made nor any public announcement. It was at this point that Colonel Yagüe laid down his command of the column attacking Madrid and went to work building up broad-based support for Franco among the Nationalist officers, most of whom were already inclined in his favor. General Kindelán, Millán Astray of the Legion and Yagüe now urged that Franco be named head of state as well as Generalissimo, and obtained his reluctant consent. Following the announcement of

the arrival of the Nationalist army at Toledo on September 27, at a great celebration of its relief at Cáceres that evening, Yagüe became the first officer to hail Franco publicly as the supreme leader (*jefe unico*) of the Nationalists.

On the 28th another meeting of top Nationalist officers at Salamanca accepted Franco as Generalissimo and head of state, with supreme military and political authority. Kindelán and Yagüe continued to take the lead in this action; Cabanellas continued to be opposed; Mola and Queipo de Llano were lukewarm and left the meeting early. That evening the latter three generals talked by telephone. Queipo, though he had not spoken out himself against Franco as supreme commander, urged Cabanellas to continue to do so.[51] Mola said he should accept it, despite his reservations, and Cabanellas agreed. The official decree of the National Defense Council designating Franco Generalissimo of the Nationalist armies and head of state was published the next day.

No time limit was placed on Franco's rule, and in fact he never relinquished it, for which he was much criticized throughout his life, especially by foreigners. But there was never much real opposition to him during the 36 years he ruled Spain from the end of the Civil War to his death; what there was came from ethnic separatists, the Basques and Catalans, and surviving admirers of the revolutionary Republic. Spain owed Franco too much to reject him, and most Spaniards knew that. It is easy to say that Franco should have held elections; perhaps, once full stability had been established and World War II ended, he should have. But elections and representative government had never worked very well in Hispanic countries, where most did not see them, as they were seen in English-speaking countries and in

[51]Queipo de Llano's opposition to the appointment of Franco as Generalissimo and head of state, not noticed by many historians, is clearly demonstrated in Stanley Payne's excellent recent study *The Franco Regime*, and fits in with Queipo's hostility to Franco's calls for fewer executions in his department, as noted above.

France, as conveying genuine legitimacy to the government. And the searing experience of Franco and every genuine Spanish Catholic during the Civil War, in which the massacres and martyrdoms in the Republic were all carried out in the name of an elected government, very few of whose members then or later protested against them, was not likely to cause them to look favorably on governments produced by elections.

The world—even the Hispanic world—has changed much in sixty years, and these conclusions and generalizations, though so long well supported, probably no longer apply. All the world today, with the exception of the four remaining Communist-ruled countries, accepts democratic elections as the sole legitimate source of political authority. A modern-day Franco would in all likelihood recognize this and hold them. But one cannot take a man out of his time. Most certainly there are eternal truths, but political systems do not partake of them. In his time, as Paul Johnson has so trenchantly pointed out,[52] Franco was right; his success in war and in peace justified his decision, based on a profound understanding of the traditions of his people as they then existed. He was, as stated earlier, neither a totalitarian nor an oppressor. In his own words in his last testament, issued just before his death in 1975, he always wished to "live and die as a Catholic."

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[52]See the chapter "Spring" above, Note 15.

October

On the first day of October in Burgos, General Franco was formally invested with the office of chief of state of Nationalist Spain. His speech of acceptance was calmly uncompromising:

> My hand will be firm, my pulse will not tremble, and I will raise Spain to a place befitting its history and its past standing. . . . Our government will be for the people, for the middle class and for the poorer classes. We will establish social justice, if necessary with an iron hand. . . . The man who has no beliefs, who has no spirituality, who does not love his family, is not a man, not a Spaniard; he is nothing.[1]

He established at once a cabinet and a civil administration, including Carlist secretaries of education (the post they had originally demanded of Mola and Sanjurjo, without success) and commerce. The new government under Franco's direction at once began asserting control over trials, court-martials and executions, where there had been numerous abuses, especially in Andalusia and the Balearic Islands. At first not fully successful in this endeavor due to the fierce passions unleashed by the atrocities in the Republic, Franco's government nevertheless attained full control of judicial procedure in most areas by early in the new year. In the Basque provinces, for example, after Cardinal Gomá had vigorously protested the execution of Basque priests who had supported the Republic because of its endorsement of Basque nationalism, Franco ordered these executions ended October 26, and his order was obeyed.[2]

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[1]José Maria Iribarren, *El general Mola*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1945), p. 223

[2]Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison WI, 1987), p. 200.

In a report to the Pope at this time, Cardinal Gomá described a great upsurge of faith and piety in Spain in response to the destruction of the churches, the profanation of devotional objects, and above all the slaughter of priests and religious. Historian Stanley Payne confirms the truth of Cardinal Gomá's observations and the cultural and educational changes resulting from this religious renewal, despite evident personal reservations about their direction:

> By the autumn of 1936 the Nationalist zone not only had a new government but was undergoing a cultural revolution of unprecedented proportions for any Western country in the twentieth century. Religious revivalism was in full swing, at least on the public level, and nationalism was held to require the restoration of traditional values and attitudes on a remarkable scale. Schools and libraries were purged not only of radical but of nearly all liberal influences, and Spanish tradition was upheld as the indispensable guide to a nation that had lost its path by following the principles of the French Revolution and liberalism.[3]

Every day the blood of the martyrs continued to teach the necessity of the renewal of Spain's traditional Catholic commitment that was so rapidly developing in the Nationalist-held areas. On October 1, the same day that Franco formally took power in Nationalist Spain, world-famous Jesuit historian Zacarías García Villada, whose great historical library had been burned earlier, was killed by militia in Madrid.[4] Many hundreds of pages have been written about the killing of the poet García Lorca by the Nationalists, a heinous crime to be sure;[5] but the equally heinous killing of this great Catholic historian is rarely mentioned in histories of the Spanish Civil War, even in passing or in a footnote. On the next day, October 2, 50 more prisoners

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[4] Antonio Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 621-622.

[5] See the discussion of it in the chapter "August," above.

were killed in Bilbao, held by the Basque nationalists for the Republic, including 14 priests and a Marist brother; 12 secular priests, five Franciscans, and two Carmelites were mowed down in the city cemetery of Castellón de la Plana in north Valencia province; and three nuns of the convent of Santa Clara de Monzón were slain at Peralta after refusing to deny their faith.[6]

In Segorbe on October 4 Martina Vázquez, a Sister of Charity well known for her holiness and care for the poor, after being taken from the hospital where she worked, was picked up by militia at night despite an illness that left her barely able to walk. As she entered their bus she asked them, "Are you going to kill me?" Assured, with a merciless hatred that lashes across these intervening sixty years like a scorpion's sting, that they were indeed going to kill her, she promptly blessed them with some holy water that she was carrying, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They killed her by the roadside. Her murderers were caught and executed in June 1939.[7]

In Barcelona on October 8, 44 Marist novices and their provincial, whom French members of their order had attempted to bring out of Republican Spain to safety in France, were shot at Moncada Cemetery shouting "*Viva Cristo Rey!*"[8] Sixty-two others, scheduled for death, were saved at the last moment by the Catalan government, which was at last beginning to assert some control over the rampant anarchists of that province, decreeing on October 9 the dissolution of all local committees then exercising political and judicial power in Catalonia. This was followed on the 16th by an order of the Largo Caballero government integrating the militia with the regular army throughout the Spanish Republic. This decree took a long time to enforce, but was necessary because of the proven inability of the often anarchist-dominated militia to fight effectively against trained sol-

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[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 250-251, 359, 525.
[7]*Ibid.*, pp. 539-541.
[8]*Ibid.*, p. 232.

diers. Tight discipline was to be introduced, both military and political, in imitation of the Red Army in the Soviet Union.

Despite these moderate improvements, substantial numbers of martyrdoms continued to occur in Catalonia and elsewhere in Republican Spain. On October 14 three priest Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, after successfully hiding from the persecution for nearly three months, were shot in a eucalyptus grove in Santander on the north coast. On October 17, in the heart of Madrid, Franciscan Father Perfecto Carrascosa was shot at a cemetery after being tortured to make him blaspheme the purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which he steadfastly refused to do. And on October 25, five cloistered Capuchin nuns were shot by militia in Valencia.[9]

Well might Manuel Fal Conde, the Carlist Secretary-General just confirmed in his office by the new Carlist royal claimant, Javier, say in a speech at Jerez de la Frontera in southern Andalusia:

> This is a religious war and a war of reconquest, for in Spain everything was conquered under the protection of the Cross and was preserved by the Cross. Therefore this war of reconstruction will end as so great an enterprise as ours *must* end—with the triumph of a glorious and sovereign institution [the Catholic Church], the model and prototype of all things Spanish.[10]

A few days earlier a dramatic scene was played out in the Nationalist city of Salamanca in western Spain, which illustrated as vividly as any in the whole Spanish Civil War the truth of what Fal Conde said and the consequences for anyone who could not or would not fully face and accept it, even if on the Nationalist side. This city was the site of the oldest and most famous of

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[9]*Ibid.*, pp. 133, 514, 608-609.

[10]Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge, England, 1975), p. 267. This speech was delivered on October 21.

all Spanish universities, established at the height of medieval Christendom in the thirteenth century: the University of Salamanca. Its rector was the well-known and highly regarded Spanish intellectual Miguel de Unamuno, philosopher, poet, and novelist. Seventy-three years old in 1936, Unamuno had been sharply critical of the Spanish monarchy and the military government of Primo de Rivera in the 1920s, and had supported the Republic when it was established in 1931, only to be shocked by the anarchic excesses and crimes which came with the Popular Front government elected in February 1936. Consequently he had supported the Nationalist rising in July. But by October he was having second thoughts. The ferocity of the war frightened him and its shedding of so much Spanish blood saddened him. He was sensitive to a general hostility to intellectuals among some Nationalist officers and spokesmen, resulting from the strong left-wing tendency of many intellectuals. The arrival of one-legged, one-armed, one-eyed General José Millán Astray, founder and commander of the Spanish Foreign Legion, for the celebration in Salamanca of the "Day of the Race" October 12, on which Spanish-speaking peoples commemorated Columbus' discovery of America, produced an extraordinary confrontation of Millán Astray with Unamuno.

Frequently described in books on the Spanish Civil War, this confrontation is almost always presented as Robert Payne describes it in his anthology of Spanish Civil War documents and reports, "the completely civilized man confronting the pure nihilist."[11] The vivid account of the confrontation by Luis Portilo, included in Payne's anthology, is often quoted. Portilo's report is superbly written, but one needs only to read the first four paragraphs to know where his sympathies lie. That is not surprising, nor even reprehensible—it is in fact characteristic of nearly all eyewitness accounts coming from the Spanish Civil War—but

[11]Robert Payne, ed., *The Civil War in Spain, 1936-1939* (New York, 1962), p. 111.

the assumption that Unamuno was unquestionably right cannot stand for anyone who understands that for millions of Catholics in Spain and elsewhere, this war was a crusade.

José Millán Astray was not a gentle man, and he had already lost many of the Legionaries he had trained to the death he had taught them, when necessary, to court. He knew the enemy, as Miguel de Unamuno—watching from a distance, safe in his ivory tower—would never know him. Millán Astray was no philosopher, novelist, or poet. He was a warrior, pure and simple, but he knew what he fought for. Millán Astray sensed that Unamuno did not know, that he did not really believe anything worth fighting for, to the death.

Millán Astray had not been on the October 12 program to speak. He was no orator. He did not know how to organize his thoughts and words to develop an argument in a speech. The speech he gave lacked logic and at times was almost incoherent. Spaniards who continued to support the bloody Republic, he cried, were guilty of rebellion and treason. They deserved death. "*Viva la muerte!*"

The audience roared out its response, led by the Falangists: "*Arriba España!*" ("Spain, arise!") "Franco, Franco, Franco!"

In Portilo's striking description of Unamuno and his response:

> Between the fine curve of his nose and the silver of his Quixote-like beard, his mouth was twisted in a bitter grimace of undisguised contempt. People began to grow uneasy. . . . At last, Don Miguel rose slowly. The silence was an enormous void. Into this void, Don Miguel began to pour the stream of his speech, as though savouring each measured word. This is the essence of what he said:
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> "All of you are hanging on my words. You all know me, and are aware that I am unable to remain silent. I have not learnt to do so in seventy-three years of my life. And now I do not wish to learn it any more. At times, to be silent is to lie. For silence can be interpreted as an acquiescence.

> "It pains me to think that General Millán Astray should dictate the pattern of mass psychology. That would be appalling. A cripple who lacks the spiritual greatness of Cervantes—a man, not a superman, virile and complete, in spite of his multilations—a cripple, I said, who lacks that loftiness of mind, is wont to seek ominous relief in seeing mutilation around him. . . . General Millán Astray would like to create Spain anew—a negative creation—in his own image and likeness. And for that reason he wishes to see Spain crippled, as he unwittingly made clear."[12]

This may sound splendid to those who dislike the Nationalists and their cause, but what does it really mean? Clearly, that General Millán Astray *wanted* his own young men, whom he had trained and loved, to be killed, or crippled as he had been—not as unavoidable necessity, not as loyal service and sacrifice in a crusade, but simply to inflict his own suffering upon them. Far from noble rhetoric, this was a despicable insinuation about a man who believed utterly in his cause and had lost a leg, and arm, and an eye in the service of his country. Millán Astray may not have fully understood what Unamuno was charging him with, but he sensed enough of it to respond in white-hot fury: "*Muera la inteligencia!*" ("Death to intelligence!")

It was an inappropriate, if understandable response to a vicious attack, and José Maria Pemán, one of the few genuine Nationalist intellectuals, responded at once with: "No, long live intelligence! Death to bad intellectuals!"[13] Names of various "bad intellectuals" were immediately shouted out. The audience was now seething with anger, some supporting Unamuno, more denouncing him. Unamuno was still standing before them, coldly hostile; then his voice rang out again:

> This is the temple of intellect, and I am its high priest. It is you who are profaning its sacred precincts.

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[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 114-116.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

> I have always, whatever the proverb may say, been a prophet in my own land. You will win, but you will not convince. You will win, because you possess more than enough brute force, but you will not convince, because to convince means to persuade. And in order to persuade you would need what you lack—reason and right in the struggle. I consider it futile to exhort you to think of Spain. I have finished.[14]

So Miguel de Unamuno was both priest and prophet; the Spanish crusaders had neither reason nor right in their struggle, and they thought nothing of Spain. They had his word for it.

Did the example of the defenders of the Alcázar of Toledo really lack the power to persuade? Did only "brute force" bring them victory?

Unamuno was fortunate to escape unharmed. In his audience were men who would have no part in playing intellectual word games at such a moment in the history of their country and of Christendom. They had seen sights like that described by Irish soldier Cecil Gerahty, as he entered the town of Guareña this month just a few minutes after Franco's army, advancing toward Madrid, had expelled the defenders of the Republic from it:

> The floor was swimming with blood, and everything in the house was wrecked. Lying by the bed was the body of an old lady of seventy-six, her head half chopped off and her poor broken arms lying unnaturally as if trying to reach the bodies of her son and grandson, who were lying beaten to death beside her. I could find no trace of a gunshot wound on either of them, but they were both terribly disfigured by the blows which had rained on them from head to foot. In the half-light of the shuttered room I could haredly keep my feet on the bloody floor as I groped my way back to the open air.[15]

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[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

[15] Cecil Geraghty, *The Road to Madrid* (London, 1937), p. 102.

Millán Astray's bodyguard was pointing his submachine-gun at Unamuno. Cries of anger filled the air. But José Millán Astray was no anarchist killer. Salamanca was under his protection and that of his fellow officers. He wanted no harm to come even to this man who had slandered him. His one good eye swept the room with a commanding glance. He saw instantly the way out.

"Unamuno!" he directed—without honorifics, as though addressing some recalcitrant private in the Legion. "Take the arm of the head of state's wife!"[16]

Doña Carmen de Polo Franco, with firm mouth and large dark eyes, the devoutly Catholic spouse of the Generalissimo, responded at once. In the words of a student in her escort, who was there:

> Franco's wife stood up with an aloofness, an elegance which I doubt she could repeat. With one hand she gestured to the Legionary to deflect his [sub]machine-gun, and with the other she took Don Miguel by the arm. Unamuno looked on the point of collapse. His head was sunk in his shoulders. With her other hand she made a gesture which we understood to mean she was summoning her guard. We formed up around the couple. Our lieutenant, perhaps on Doña Carmen's instructions, took up a position on Unamuno's other side and placed an arm round his shoulder. We had to use our rifle butts to control the spectators who pressed forward. There were shouts and cries "*Rojo cabrón!*" ["Red bastard!"] Franco's wife opened the door of her official car and told the lieutenant to take Unamuno home.[17]

Few recent historians describing this confrontation seem to have noticed that it was Millán Astray himself who brought Carmen Franco to save Unamuno from the threatening crowd—hardly the act of a bloodthirsty nihilist.

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[16]Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: an Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1979), p. 207.

[17]*Ibid.*

On the last day of the year 1936 Miguel de Unamuno died—a good man who yet could find no place for himself in a fight to the death for *Santa Fe*, the Holy Faith; who was in fact not a prophet, in his own land or elsewhere; who by the end of his intellectually illustrious career had lost sight of the fundamental truth that God has made foolish the wisdom of this world; and who apparently no longer understood that there is only one true priesthood and one true High Priest, Who entered once and for all into the temple, and made the sacrifice on Calvary that opened the gates of Heaven to the human race.

In the early days of October the Largo Caballero government fulfilled earlier promises by the Republic to provide self-government (autonomy) for the two major areas of Spain whose popular speech was not Spanish: the Basque provinces in the north and Catalonia in the northeast. The experiment lasted less than a year, during which the Basque provinces were occupied by the Nationalists and Catalonia was brought back under the full control of the central government, though with promises to restore its autonomy after a Republican victory. Nevertheless this short-lived autonomy had substantial effects on the course of the war. In the Basque province it dulled the edge of the crusade; in Catalonia it sharpened that edge.

The Basque people of Spain, from whom both St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier had come, had long been staunchly Catholic, as they continued to be even under the most difficult conditions of the Spanish Republic in 1936. Of all territories which flew the flag of the Republic, only the two Basque provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa kept their churches open and allowed the unrestricted practice of the Catholic Faith. Apparently oblivious to the condition of the Faith elsewhere in the Republic, its Basque supporters satisfied their consciences by largely preventing attacks upon the Church in their own territory. A Basque assembly meeting at the traditional spot for such gatherings, under an ancient oak tree outside the town of Guernica,

elected José Antonio Aguirre—a practicing Catholic—president and swore him in with his cabinet, including four Basque Nationalists, three Socialists, one Communist, and two Republicans. Anarchists were not included. A Mass was said for the assembly and the cabinet by a traditionalist priest who had secretly made his way to Guernica with Communion hosts smuggled out of Madrid. So long as a predominantly Catholic government in the two Basque provinces continued to fight for the regime in Madrid, the Republic could not be said to be totally anti-Catholic, though the Nationalists naturally considered the Republican Basques to be traitors. The presence of Basque Catholics on the Republican side was the principal reason Pope Pius XI did not recognize Franco's regime as the legitimate government of Spain until the Basque provinces had been overrun and incorporated into Nationalist Spain in 1937.

As for Catalonia, though the establishment of an autonomous provincial government there did reduce the number of indiscriminate killings by its militia,[18] the anarchists remained influential with both the government and the people, and the savagery of their rhetoric was unchanged. An article in the anarchist paper *Worker' Solidarity* on October 18 contained this passage:

> Not a single church has been left standing in Barcelona, and it may be assumed that they will not be restored and that pickaxe and hammer will complete the demolition of what the fire began by purifying. But what about the villages? Not only must not a single one of the cassocked blackbeetles be left, but we must eradicate any germs which they may have incubated. Destruction, then! Not a moment's hesitation! Blood and fire![19]

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[18]See above, this chapter.

[19]Francisco Lacruz, *El Alzamiento; la revolución y el terror en Barcelona, 1936-1939* (Barcelona, 1943), p. 127.

On October 24 the Catalan government (Generalitat) took over all factories employing more than 100 workers, and smaller businesses if the owners were Nationalists or 75 per cent of the workers requested the takeover. These factories were to be administered by "workers' councils," with a government representative on each council and fifty per cent of any profits to go to the government, while the rest was to be kept and spent locally. However, in practice, as in socialized factories everywhere, there were no profits, only endless shortfalls and losses. Though the most solidly revolutionary of any part of Spain, Catalonia remained an economic drain upon the government, and a source of political instability and strife for the Republic, throughout the rest of the Spanish Civil War.

On October 7 the Nationalist march on Madrid resumed. Colonel Yagüe resumed active duty with the 10,000-man column from Morocco, though General Varela continued to command it. Another column of equal size, consisting of regular soldiers, requetés and Falangists under the command of General Valdés Cabanellas (who reported to Mola), was marching south to join Varela's column at Madrid. By the middle of the month the southern column had taken Navalcarnero just twenty miles southwest of Madrid and the northern column had taken Sigüenza about seventy miles northeast of it. In view of the fact that Toledo, just forty miles from Madrid, had been relieved nearly three weeks before, this was slow movement by the Nationalists, which surely had more to do with their subsequent defeat before Madrid than the brief detour to relieve the Alcázar of Toledo, which only required about a week yet is usually blamed for the delay.

During this first half of October occurred another epic defensive struggle by the Nationalists in the northern province of Asturias, where the heroic defense of the Simancas barracks in Gijón had ended in August. On October 4 revolutionary militia and some Spanish Republican army units attacked Colonel An-

tonio Aranda in the Asturian capital of Oviedo, where he had at first pretended to be a supporter of the Republic, then proclaimed his support for the officers' rising in July. He held Oviedo with a garrison of about 3,000 men, one-third of whom were civilian volunteers, the rest being Civil Guards, Assault Guards, and some units of the Falange. The attackers had about five times that number, finally concentrating this large force against the city after the fall of the Simancas barracks, though only after numerous delays. The battle raged furiously for the next two weeks. The revolutionaries secured the outskirts of the city and pressed on into the city center, which the Nationalists defended with a relentless determination matching that of their compatriots at the sieges of the Simancas barracks and the Alcázar of Toledo. On one major street in Oviedo, San Lázaro Street, for days the Nationalists controlled one side of it and the revolutionaries the other. Colonel Aranda called for the city to be defended to the last man. An officer of the garrison, Jesûs-Evaristo Casariego, declared later:

> We were prepared to burn the city, to create barricades of fire between us and the enemy. We were fighting street by street, house by house, story by story, room by room. We weren't prepared to surrender under any conditions. Win or die—there was no other choice.[20]

The attackers confirmed the tenacity of the garrison's resistance and the tremendous losses they inflicted—more than half the attacking force was killed or wounded. By October 15 Colonel Aranda's ammunition, food, and drinkable water were all running out. He sent a message to General Mola saying: "The only thing left for us is to die like Spaniards."[21] But the Nationalists were able to send a column from Galicia to the west to relieve him. On October 17 the relieving force reached the embat-

[20]Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 252.

[21]James W. Cortada, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (London, 1982), p. 34.

tled and devastated city, mostly reduced to rubble. About half of Aranda's garrison was dead or wounded; but they had prevailed.

On October 16, as the Nationalists drew ever closer to Madrid, Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union sent a telegram to Spanish Communist Party chief José Díaz which for the first time gave his full, unqualified support to the Spanish revolution:

> The workers of the USSR only fulfill their duty in rendering all possible help to the revolutionary masses in Spain. They recognize that the liberation of Spain from the yoke of the fascist reactionaries is not the private concern of Spaniards alone, but the common cause of all progressive humanity.[22]

On the following day, when the road junction of Ilescas midway between Toledo and Madrid was taken by advancing Nationalist troops, a training base for the Communist International Brigades was set up at Albacete in a thinly populated region of east central Spain in the old province of Murcia. The Comintern had finalized its decision to create these International Brigades and established the headquarters of the Communist Fifth Regiment at Albacete early in October. The first Communist international volunteers intended to make up the new Brigades arrived at the Republican port of Alicante on October 13 and reached Albacete by train the following day. They consisted of 500 men, mostly Frenchmen from Paris. There was nothing yet to show how quickly international communism could move in such an undertaking, and this small group still seemed insignificant compared to the 20,000 men, mostly trained veterans, now being deployed by the Nationalists before Madrid. The dispirited and perhaps conscience-stricken Manuel Azaña suddenly fled the capital. On October 19 he left Madrid for Barcelona without telling anyone that he was going.

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[22]Robert G. Colodny, *The Struggle for Madrid* (New York, 1958), pp. 27-28.

But the troops of the Republic were still full of fight. Six thousand militia actually attacked the Nationalists at Chapineria on the day of Azaña's flight, but were beaten back by Nationalist Colonel Antonio Castejón after a fierce struggle in the militia's favorite killing ground, a cemetery. The next day the Republic's General Asensio, still capable and determined, launched a much larger counterattack, the largest of the war to date, at Illescas, bringing 15,000 troops down from Madrid in double-decker buses. But the Nationalists held fast, the battle ended in a draw, and three days later the Nationalist advance from Illescas resumed. Largo Caballero blamed Asensio for not winning a victory, removed him from command, and "kicked him upstairs" to the post of Under-Secretary of War. His replacement was a regular army officer from a strongly monarchist family, General Sebastián Pozas; at the same time overall command of the defense of Madrid was given to another regular army officer who had been previously suspected of Nationalist leanings, General José Miaja. When coupled with the growing pessimism of the government about its ability to hold Madrid, these appointments suggest that Largo Caballero intended the two officers as cannon fodder in a battle he expected to lose.

Meanwhile, on October 22, Largo Caballero had formally and publicly agreed to the formation and use of the Communist International Brigades in the war in Spain. Earlier, in September, he and his Finance Minister Juan Negrin, without consulting President Azaña or any other minister, had promised to send the entire national gold reserve of Spain to the Soviet Union as financial security for present and future shipments of arms and strategic materials to the Republic. On this same day, October 22, the loading of 7,900 gold ingots worth about $800 million (in 1936 dollars, at least six billion dollars' worth today) began on four Russian ships at the port of Cartagena under the supervision of Alexander Orlov of the Soviet secret police (then called the

NKVD). The ships sailed October 25 and delivered their golden cargo at the Soviet Black Sea port of Odessa on November 6. Stalin was delighted with this accession to his treasury, and held one of his famous vodka-sloshing parties to celebrate it. "The Spaniards will never see their gold again, just as one cannot see one's own ears!"[23] the former bank robber of the Caucasus declared jubilantly; and indeed they did not.

On October 28 the southern Nationalist column, commanded by General Varela and now consisting of about 9,000 men, had spread out to form a broad semicircle about fifteen miles southwest of Madrid, from the Jarama River around to the town of Brunete due west of Madrid. Soviet aircraft and tanks were now available in some quantity; Largo Caballero boasted that they would destroy the forces about to assault the capital. At dawn on the 29th Russian bombers struck Nationalist airfields, while 15 Russian tanks led an attack which knocked out many Italian tanks, but was insufficiently followed up by infantry not trained in working with armored vehicles. The Nationalists destroyed two of the tanks with bottles of flaming gasoline and a third broke down and had to be abandoned to them. That same day the Nationalists retaliated with limited bombing of Madrid, aiming chiefly at its airfields and other military targets, with six to nine planes making two sorties a day. The next day, the 30th, one of the Nationalist bombs went astray and hit a school, killing 60 children, of which the revolutionary propagandists made much; but such accidents will always happen in aerial bombing near any city, and if unintended and sporadic are not sufficient grounds for condemnation under the Catholic moral doctrine of double effect. On the 31st the French government decided to permit the recruiting of volunteers to fight for the Spanish Republic, and Hitler decided to send 100 more German planes to support the Nationalists in Spain.

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[23]Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1986), p. 450.

The greatest battle of the war to date was impending: the battle for Madrid. Both sides regarded it as decisive. Franco and the Nationalists were confident of victory; the evidence suggests that Largo Caballero had many doubts, and President Azaña had obviously given up. But the Communist intervention was to have a much greater impact than anyone in Spain suspected at the end of October. The Comintern, despite its absolute control by Stalin's agents, was still seen by many in the West as an independent, idealistic organization fighting, at least in Spain, for a good cause. Men and women of the Left all over the Western world, including not only Communists and their consistent sympathizers but also many who would not follow Stalin or the Comintern but believed profoundly in the rightness of the cause of the Spanish Republic (as so many, including historians, still do to this day), were ready, willing, and eager to help the Republic. They were encouraged in misperception of the war and its issues because the Republic was not openly Communist and Largo Caballero, though Communist by belief (a fact not widely known outside Spain), was not a member of the Communist Party. It was possible for Leftists, and many at the political center, to believe that the elected Popular Front still actually governed Spain.

These excuses for ignorance of the true situation in Spain and for support of the revolutionary government of Largo Caballero do not, however, apply to the religious persecution. It was far too extensive and its victims far too numerous to be hidden; by October 1936 the whole world knew about it. It was this far-flung and ghastly persecution (described at some length in these pages) that caused faithful, practicing Catholics to become the one substantial element in Western countries—other than the totalitarian German and Italian governments, which had reasons of their own for military intervention in Spain—to support the Spanish Nationalists. The religious persecution was impossible to defend or justify, then or later, though some feeble attempts were made to do so; consequently reporters, writers, and histori-

ans of the Left talked about the persecution and the martyrdoms as little as possible, then and later. This "dim-out," if not blackout in the standard communications media (a practice with which we have become only too familiar since 1936) dimmed and eventually eclipsed public perception and memory of the religious persecution. Almost no one outside the Catholic Church now knows about the nearly seven thousand priests and religious martyred during the Spanish Civil War.

The crusade in Spain in 1936 is the only one of all the crusades in the history of Christendom whose very existence, as a crusade, was and remained unknown to most of the West. It might almost be called the hidden crusade. The world knew it was being fought, but mostly did not know what it was being fought for. The consequence was that, while the military equipment (mainly aircraft and tanks) shipped to the two contenders from their respective foreign supporters (the Soviet Union for the Republic, Germany and Italy for the Nationalists) generally counterbalanced each other, the great majority of foreign volunteers went to the Republic, with the tightly organized and disciplined Communist International Brigades by far the most effective of them. In the battles of November 1936 they held Madrid, keeping it in revolutionary hands for two and a half long, terrible years. But the Catholic Nationalists persevered to the end, and in the end they won. Many crusades in the history of Christendom were lost; but both the First Crusade and the last crusade triumphed.

November-December

On November 2 General Franco wrote a proclamation to the people of Madrid, broadcasting it on radio and dropping it into the city from airplanes:

> *Madrileños*: Madrid is to be liberated. Be calm, and stay away from the combat zones. Keep your families at home which our noble and disciplined troops will respect and protect. Only those who have deceived you by saying that we mistreat women and children have anything to fear. Militia and workers of Madrid: Throw down your arms, and free yourselves from the lying leaders who also deceive you and now abandon you. We will know the guilty, and only on them will fall the weight of the law.[1]

Franco's intelligence was good. It told him that the nerve of the Republican government was cracking, and that its withdrawal from the now beleaguered capital city was already being discussed. A measure of the government's desperation was its startling decision on November 4 to admit anarchists to the cabinet. Not only was this a howling philosophical contradiction, but in practice the anarchists had clearly shown themselves as ungovernable as their name indicated; and the ungovernable could hardly govern. Famous Catalan anarchist leader García Oliver was made Minister of Justice; his first act was to destroy all criminal records in Madrid. Another anarchist was made Minister of Health—bitter irony in view of the fact that the principal activity of Spanish anarchists since July 19 had been the murder, massacre, and mass imprisonment of their fellow countrymen.

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[1]Robert G. Colodny, *The Struggle for Madrid* (New York, 1958), p. 32.

On November 5, after three days of attempting to use the Russian tanks, the army of the Republic had little to show for it, since neither the Spanish tank crews nor the infantry supposed to work with the tanks understood this new kind of warfare. Demoralized by the failure of their tank attacks, the Republican troops were falling back toward the city, until Varela's Nationalists had occupied Getafe airport and several suburbs and were only four miles from the Puerta del Sol at the heart of Madrid. "One more thrust is all that is needed," a confident General Varela declared that day.[2] As though in agreement with Varela, the government of the Republic that day suffered a complete collapse of confidence, deciding to leave Madrid and retire to Valencia on the east coast.

Its wild, sometimes comic-opera flight November 6 seemed for an all too brief moment to spell the end of the war and the immediate victory of the crusade. Largo Caballero proved himself to be what his Socialist rival Indalecio Prieto had always called him: no more than a bombastic, egotistical orator of limited intelligence and little real leadership ability despite his immense yet largely undeserved reputation. He was in such a hurry to get out of Madrid that he did not even wait to deliver personal instructions to the two generals he was leaving behind him, José Miaja and Sebastián Pozas; he only dropped off letters for them, marked not to be opened until the next morning. Fortunately for themselves Miaja and Pozas opened their envelopes together on the evening of the 6th without waiting for the morning, and found that the two letters had been put in the wrong envelopes. When duly exchanged, they found that Pozas was ordered to withdraw fifty miles southeast to Tarancón—too far away to be of any help in the defense of Madrid—while Miaja was to form a junta with remaining civilian leaders and defend the capital as

[2] *Ibid*., p. 35.

best he could. He immediately began trying to reach selected officers and politicians, finding that many of those he sought had also fled. But the commander of the Fifth Regiment—all Communists—responded with a pledge to defend Madrid street by street and house by house. That evening Soviet General Vladimir Goriev joined Miaja's staff. On that same day a German Communist writer named Arnold Vieth von Golssenau, who called himself Ludwig Renn and had been an officer in World War I, arrived at the Communist camp at Albacete and took command of the mostly German Thaelmann battalion of the International Brigades, now ready to go into action at Madrid.

Informed that night that Miaja was now commanding the defenders of Madrid, Varela scoffed: "He is a poor old grandpa; we will beat him easily!"[3] But the officers and men of the Communist International Brigades were far from being poor old grandfathers, and it was they who now took charge of the battle.

As for the fleeing government, they were stopped at Tarancón by a band of anarchists who threatened them with death if they did not stay at their posts in Madrid. Only the insistence of anarchist leaders in Madrid, so curiously emplaced in the Republican cabinet, prevailed upon the anarchists at Tarancón to allow the government to continue fleeing.

Meanwhile the crusading army was gathering for its greatest battle so far. The passionate young men with the red berets and the Sacred Heart badges who had answered Alfonso Carlos' call for the requetés on July 19 and made up Juan Urra Lusarreta's 4th Company of the Bailén Battalion, encamped for three days at the Madrid suburb of Brunete. On the last day's march, at the village of Navalagamella, Juan had found the parish church with all its holy images smashed and discarded in a pile of masonry. From that pile he had drawn out a representation of Jesus' Sacred Heart, still intact though the statue which had borne it was

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

shattered. Now, in Brunete, he found its church, "as spacious as a cathedral," in a condition even more shocking.

> They had violently torn out, from the high and beautiful altar of the church, a figure of Christ of great size, and at the door of the church they had burned it so that almost all the image was blackened, especially the upper part. The right forearm was missing, which, torn from the image, remained nailed to the cross above the altar. That holy arm, pointing to Heaven, appeared to call for justice for so much sacrilege.[4]

Writing of this years later, Juan grimly added:

> Two years later the town of Brunete was the scene of very bloody fighting and the final great destruction of the godless on the Madrid front.[5]

November 7 was a Saturday. General Franco, as confident as Varela, said that he expected to attend Sunday Mass in Madrid the following morning. Nationalist troops attacked at the Manzanares River, a shallow low-lying stream on whose east bank rises the city center. By an extraordinary coincidence it was the nineteenth anniversary of the Communist Revolution in Russia. Posters exhorted the Madrid militia: "Emulate Petrograd! 7 November on the Manzanares must be as glorious as on the Neva!"[6] Telephoned reports of the action from Russian correspondent Michael Koltsov were broadcast to the marchers parading in Red Square in Moscow to commemorate the anniversary. The militia at the Manzanares River bridges resisted strongly. That evening two thousand troops from the 11th Communist International Brigade arrived—Germans of the Thaelmann battalion, French of the Paris Commune battalion, Poles, and some English—

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[4]Urra Lusarreta, *En las trincheras del frente de Madrid*, pp. 116-117.
[5]*Ibid.*, p. 117.
[6]Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: an Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1979), p. 255.

marching down Madrid's Gran Via, steel-helmeted, well armed, in step, making a great impression on the frightened people of the city.

That night the mass killing of prisoners began in Madrid. Just as in Paris at the beginning of the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution, in September 1792, when the march of a Prussian-Austrian army toward Paris was made the occasion to kill over 1,400 political prisoners in the city including 191 priests and religious, so in this bloody November 1936 in Madrid over 2,400 prisoners were taken from their cells, helpless to escape or resist, shot, and buried in large trenches. They included at least two hundred priests and religious. The killing was mostly done by prison guards, with the knowledge but without the orders or intervention of the few Republican government officials remaining in Madrid.[7] On November 10 another atrocity against helpless nuns was committed in Madrid. Twenty-three nuns of the order of Adoratrices, who had been arrested in the apartment in which they had been living after their convent was closed by government order, on the incredible charge that one of them had shot a militiaman on the street from their window, were taken to Madrid's East Cemetery and killed there at dawn.[8]

At nine o'clock in the evening of November 7 General Varela's operations order for what was intended to be the decisive assault the following day, fell into the hands of his enemies. It was found in the pocket of a Nationalist officer killed when the inadequately armored Italian tank in which he was riding was blown up. Brought to General Miaja, the operations order told him that Varela's main attacks would be made at the Franceses bridge over the Manzanares River and on University City, a

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[7]Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España. 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 336, 343-345; José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), p. 31.

[8]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 496-497.

listen that he would strike again the next morning. After four assaults Varela's Nationalists finally succeeded in crossing the Manzanares River and reaching the heights of University City, but with only a relatively small force of about a thousand. The Communist International Brigades were brought up to stop them there, and once again they succeeded.

November 16 and 17 brought the climax. While both sides continued to fight each other to a bloody standstill along the banks of the Manzanares River, particularly at Puerto de los Franceses, constantly swept by a crossfire of machine-guns,[9] a few of the Moroccan troops fighting for the Nationalists actually penetrated into the heart of Madrid. Six thousand Republican troops including both the 11th International Brigade and Durruti's column assaulted the thousand Nationalists in University City. Hugh Thomas, the premier historian of the Spanish Civil War, vividly describes the scene:

> The babel of tongues, the frequent multilingual singing of the "International," the insults exchanged between the Nationalists and Republicans, added to the macabre confusion. The marching songs of the German Communists brought to the crumbling masonry of the laboratories and lecture halls a Teutonic sadness. Anarchists fraternized with men from the [International] Brigade. Muffled commands sounded in the darkness addressed to men who had never seen the city which they had come to defend: "*Bataillon Thaelmann, fertig machen! Bataillon André Marty, descendez vite! Garibaldi, avanti!*" Hours of artillery and aerial bombardment, in which neither side gave way, were succeeded by hand-to-hand battles for single rooms or floors of buildings. In the still unfinished Clinical Hospital, the Thaelmann Battalion placed bombs in lifts to be sent up to explode in the faces of the Moroccans on the next floor; and, in that building, the Moroccans suffered losses by eating inoculated animals kept for experimental purposes. Great courage was shown on both sides. A company of Poles from the Dombrowsky

[9]Juan Urra Lusarreta memorably called that place on that day "the mouth of the wolf" (*En las trincheras del frente de Madrid*, p. 119).

> Battalion resisted in the French Institute's Casa de Velázquez to the last man. An advance guard of Moroccans drove back Durruti's anarchists once again at the Plaza de Moncloa, the first square inside Madrid proper, and began to fight their way along the Calle de la Princesa. Some even drove down the Paseo de Rosales to reach the Plaza de España. All were killed. But the rumor that "the Moors are in the Plaza de España" was not easy to staunch.[10]

Anyone who thinks or has been told that the Spanish Civil War, at least in its first year, was not really against Communists, needs only to read any good account of the siege of Madrid to learn the truth.

On November 6 the German Condor Legion had arrived in Sevilla, consisting of four bomber squadrons and four fighter squadrons, in all about 100 aircraft, and more than 3,000 support troops, operating under an agreement placing it under German operational command but ultimately under Franco's control. The planes were flown to airfields around Madrid. They began bombing it on November 14 and continued to bomb it each day (actually mostly at night) for the next ten days. Despite fantastic exaggerations at the time and subsequently, only a relatively small number of civilians were killed in this bombing—244, along with 875 injured and about 300 buildings damaged.[11] The German pilots and planes were getting the practice Hitler wanted for the blitzes of World War II. Though the casualties were small, the action was unjust since it does not appear that much effort was made to strike military targets only; but Franco at this critical moment, understandably if not justifiably, did not try to intervene against it. In any case the bombing was useless and even counterproductive from the Nationalist standpoint. It

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[10]Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1986), pp. 484-486.

[11]George Hills, *The Battle for Madrid* (New York, 1976), p. 106. These totals cover the period November 14 to 23.

served only to further infuriate the people of Madrid, already for the most part hostile to the besiegers.

On the 17th the Nationalists got two more columns into University City, finally gaining control of the Clinical Hospital (where the Foreign Legion triumphed after a long and desperate struggle) and the Parque del Oeste. Two Nationalist tanks clanked down the Calle de la Princesa toward the Plaza de España, but were stopped by the defenders before reaching the big square. When the day was done, a somewhat reinforced Nationalist contingent of about two thousand troops in University City faced no less than 12,000 troops of the Republic. Though many of these were poorly trained local militia, they had been raised to ferocious enthusiasm by the successful resistance thus far. Every night the Communist spellbinder, Dolores Ibarruri, "*la Pasionaria*," was on the radio with her battle cry of "*No pasaran!*" ("They shall not pass!") In the open field Franco and Varela could probably have won, even against troops as good as the Communists of the International Brigades and the 6-1 odds. But in the confining and deadly environment of a great and largely hostile city, it was not possible.

Neither side, strung to the highest pitch of determination as they were, could at first accept that the great battle had ended in a draw. Reinforcements were arriving; General Mola had come with a substantial force of requetés to augment the attackers. But the defenders were being reinforced too, at an equal or greater rate. Sporadic fighting continued in University City, three-quarters of which was now held by the Nationalists, but the other quarter was still held by the Republic, including the strategically placed Hall of Philosophy and Letters from which the defenders could protect the Plaza de Moncloa, gateway to the heart of Madrid. Trenches were being dug, buildings strongly fortified. At the Santa Cristina Asylum, used by the Nationalists as their administration building in University City and containing a chapel that had not been profaned, Juan Urra Lusarreta and his requeté comrades formed a choir whose rich young voices rang out every

Sunday at Mass with the ancient chant, beloved of crusaders: "CHRISTUS VINCIT! CHRISTUS REGNAT! CHRISTUS IMPERAT!"[12]

Buenaventura Durruti, commander of the anarchist column from Catalonia, was especially unhappy with the prospect of a draw. So ultimate a revolutionary that even the Communists appeared to him as untrustworthy compromisers,[13] he yearned for complete victory. He had persuaded the more cautious General Miaja to authorize an attack on November 19 by his battered and decimated anarchists on the towering hospital building, now strongly held by the Nationalists. Durruti insisted that the attack proceed despite a torrential downpour of rain. Hearing that two of his companies were flipping coins to decide which should attack first, he flew into a rage and ordered them both to go immediately into action. Then he went back to the Miguel-Angel barracks where his men had been quartered. There, a little before two o'clock in the afternoon, he received a message that his men were retreating from the hospital. Furious again, he jumped into his car and ordered his chauffeur to drive at top speed for the battle area. The car stopped near the "Model Prison," from which so many had already been taken for execution, when Durruti saw some of his men fleeing. He leaped from the car, cursed them, and ordered them back into the Nationalist fire. Durruti, a big, tall, swarthy man, "built like a tree," was frightening and overpowering in his anger. The men went as he directed. He returned to the car. At its door he suddenly slumped over. He had received a mortal wound, and died the next day in the hospital, whispering: "Keep on fighting!"[14]

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[12]Urra Lusarreta, *En las trincheras del frente de Madrid*, p. 160.

[13]Meeting Soviet reporter Michael Koltsov in a street in Madrid November 18, Durruti said to him: "You see, they haven't killed me and I also haven't become a Bolshevik." (Abel Paz, *Durruti: the People Armed* [New York, 1977], p. 302).

[14]Juan Llarch, *La muerte de Durruti* (Barcelona, 1973), p. 18.

Durruti's admirers and the government spread the story that he had been killed by a bullet fired by a Nationalist sharpshooter from one of the windows of the hospital, but the doctor who examined his wound testified that it was surrounded by such clearly defined powder marks that the bullet could not have been fired from more than 50 centimeters (approximately one foot) away from his body. Of the men in the car with Durruti, the one in the right rear seat was never clearly identified; one witness called him "Ragar," others had no name for him, and whoever he was, he promptly disappeared. Durruti's widow always believed her husband had been murdered, as did many others. Historian Anthony Beevor thinks that the trigger of the machine pistol of one of his escort caught on the car door handle, causing it to fire accidentally into Durruti,[15] after which its bearer understandably vanished. But Buenaventura Durruti had cut too bloody a swath across Spanish history for pure accident to seem a likely explanation for his being shot at close range, though it is of course possible. His widow said it had been "an act of vengeance."[16] So it may well have been; or perhaps the nameless rider in the right rear seat of Durruti's car simply concluded that this man had killed enough, that it was time for him to reap what he had sown.

On the very day Durruti died, November 20, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, leader of the Falange, who had been imprisoned by the government of the Republic since before the outbreak of the war, was shot in Alicante prison yard with two other Falangists and two Carlists.

On November 22 the Nationalists in Madrid made a last attempt to attack the center of the city from the Parque del Oeste, aiming for the Model Prison, but were beaten back. The next day Franco held a meeting of his commanders at which it was decided to end the frontal attacks on Madrid and try to encircle it

[15]Anthony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1983), p. 138.
[16]Robert Payne, ed. *The Civil War in Spain* (New York, 1962), p. 125.

instead. That decision, necessary though it was, extinguished any hope for a quick ending of the Spanish Civil War. It would continue for two and a half more years.

The belief that the successful resistance in Madrid was a kind of "miracle"[17] derives far more from the government's panic at the beginning of the siege and the widespread belief throughout Spain and the world that Madrid could not be held against the Nationalist army, than from the actual military situation. Normally attackers must have numerical superiority over defenders to prevail, unless they have unchallenged control of the air. The German aircraft did not have clear control of the air (that is why their bombing raids on Madrid were mostly carried out at night) and the defenders of Madrid outnumbered the attackers by a wide margin. Only an undisciplined, demoralized defense could have been overcome by the limited forces available to Franco and Varela. That might have happened—probably would have happened—but for the arrival of the Communist International Brigades in the nick of time. Whatever could and should be said in condemnation of the ideology and morality of these men, they certainly fought well, and knew what they were fighting for. Such soldiers win battles—and wars. They won this battle, but were not to win this war; for the Spanish crusaders matched them, man for man, as they had matched them in the desperate struggle on November 9 among the ilex and gum trees of the Casa de Campo. In the end they smashed them, inflicting such high casualties that the Brigades broke up. At least six thousand of these vicious or deluded young men left their bones in the Spain they could not conquer for communism.[18]

On November 24, once again Cardinal Isidro Gomá, primate of Spain, hailed the crusade in a pastoral letter:

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[17]It is ironic how often this word was used, then and since, to describe that resistance, by people who did not and do not believe in miracles, at least in history—just as the defenders of Madrid in November 1936 did not.

[18]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 983.

> This most cruel war is at bottom a war of principles, of doctrines, of one concept of life and social reality against another, of one civilization against another. It is a war waged by the Christian and Spanish spirit against another spirit.[19]

That "other spirit" of which Cardinal Gomá spoke had revealed itself with unmistakable clarity in two martyrdoms occurring within ten days of the release of the Cardinal's pastoral letter. On November 15 Juan Duarte y Martín, a deacon of the parish of Alora in the diocese of Málaga on the southern coast of Spain, was sprayed with gasoline and burned to death by militia after a week's ghastly calvary during which he was tortured with electric currents to make him blaspheme, and castrated.[20] And on the 17th, five Brothers of the Christian Schools and a parish priest were taken by militia at Lorca in Murcia province to be shot in a sulfur mine, after which the militia danced on their bodies before hurling them into a deep chasm.[21]

Following its flight from Madrid early in the month, the government of the Republic had established itself in Valencia, where the Soviet and Communist presence soon became overwhelmingly evident—particularly after the success of the International Brigades in the defense of Madrid. In the words of an American reporter:

> The Russian influence was apparent everywhere in Valencia. Posters announcing Communist organization meetings were plastered on buildings and fences; oleos of Stalin, Lenin and Marx and bronze lapel-pins fashioned in the shape of a hammer and sickle were on sale at every street corner; Marxist literature predominated at the book stalls; the only motion pictures were Russian propaganda films; sound

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[19]Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison WI, 1987), p. 200.

[20]Lisardo Guede, *Martirologio Malaginense* (Málaga, 1988), pp. 63-64.

[21]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 270-271.

> trucks blared forth an unceasing stream of Communist propaganda in the plazas, and the Red flag vied with the anarchist black-and-red banners on public buildings. As in Madrid and Barcelona, streets had been renamed to conform to Marxist ideals. Directions were often difficult to find because the residents had not yet become accustomed to the new system of nomenclature. Saints' names, by which most streets in Spain are known, and names of former prominent conservative political leaders were removed. The new names included Via Russia, Paseo de Lenin, Avenida de la Pasionaria . . . Plaza Rojo, Avenida Thaelman, Avenida Libertarian and other names associated with the revolutionary theme.[22]

In this atmosphere it was not surprising that no less than 29 nuns, not only innocent of harming anyone but virtually incapable of doing so, were killed in Valencia in just five days, from November 20 to 24.[23]

Priests and religious were still being relentlessly hunted down and killed in Barcelona. On the night of November 24 Jesuit Father Bartolomé Arbona, aged 75, who had been bringing the Eucharist to hidden Christians in Barcelona since the outbreak of the war, and hearing their confessions, was caught by a militia patrol. The next day Barcelona militia arrested Father Cirilo Montaner, missionary priest of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who had been in hiding in the house of Antonio Domenech since July, saying Mass daily for small groups of the faithful. He had written to a priest friend: "I see that though I am not yet worthy to form part of the glorious legion [of the martyrs], it remains for me now to be in the rear guard."[24] On November 28 Father Montaner was shot at Moncada cemetery; on

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[22]H. Edward Knoblaugh, *Correspondent in Spain* (New York, 1937), pp. 167-168.

[23]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 508, 511.

[24]*Ibid.*, p. 117.

the next day Father Arbona joined him in the glory of martyrdom.[25] Just two days later Archbishop Manuel Irurita of Barcelona, in hiding since the firestorm of July, was discovered by militiamen in a house-to-house search in Barcelona. At first the militia thought that he was just another priest; when they asked him if he had said Mass while in hiding, he said he had, every day. When they identified him as the archbishop of Barcelona, they shot him at once, after he had told them: "I bless all of you who are in my presence, and I also bless the balls that will bring about my death, for they will be the keys that will open the gates of heaven for me."[26] He was the eleventh of thirteen bishops martyred in Spain during its Civil War.

By December there were at least 70,000 requetés under arms in support of the Nationalists. They had their own units and their own officers, entirely separate from the infrastructure of the Nationalist regular army based on the forces brought from Morocco at the beginning of the civil war. But the Carlists fully acknowledged the authority of Franco and his government; on December 12 Carlist regent Javier declared publicly that the support of his people for the Nationalist cause was not contingent upon a restoration of the monarchy in any form, and that a strong military government would be needed for years to come. After that, the Carlists hoped that their traditionalist movement might "offer a solution" for the perpetuation of a truly Catholic regime in Spain.[27]

Nevertheless Franco felt uneasy about the independence of the Carlists. Early in December he was, or professed to be deeply angered by an announcement by Manuel Fal Conde, the secretary-general of the Traditionalist Communion of Spain, that a Carlist military academy would be set up to train new officers to command requeté units, providing instruction both in military

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[25]*Ibid.*, pp. 117, 592-593.
[26]*Ibid.*, p. 421.
[27]Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge, England, 1975), p. 266.

strategy and tactics and in Carlist religious and political principles. Fal Conde had informed Mola of this plan and received no objection from him, but in an unaccountable and disastrous oversight, had not informed Franco of it nor received his permission. Franco summoned Fal Conde to his headquarters at Salamanca, and informed him that he must go into exile.

Such self-evident overreaction clearly indicated that Franco had been looking for an excuse to bring the Carlists under tighter control, and knew and resented the fact that Fal Conde's highest loyalty would never be to him. But it was neither in Franco's interest nor in the interest of Nationalist Spain to emphasize that. Franco and the Carlist leadership needed each other. Neither could have prevailed in the crusade without the other. Franco rightly counted on the continuing loyalty of the rank and file of the requetés to him and to his high command while the struggle was actually going on. But in the long run, in Spain after victory was won, he needed a strong and active Carlist movement led by Fal Conde to provide the ideological guidance and continuity to rebuild and maintain a Catholic Spain, which Franco as a relatively unimaginative general—however successful in the field and personally devout—could never provide. By exiling Fal Conde, thereby signalling his determination to control and restrict the Carlists, he deprived Spain of a priceless asset. It was the greatest mistake of his life, and one of the principal causes for the failure of the Catholic Spain he led to survive his death 39 years later.

On December 20 the Carlist National War Junta reluctantly accepted Franco's order that Fal Conde must leave the country. The great Carlist leader went to Lisbon, and never returned to Spain. Alfonso Carlos' widow, Mary of the Snows, protested in vain from Vienna. On that same day Franco decreed that all militias (primarily the requeté and the Falange) must be fully integrated into the Nationalist army and accept officers from that

army regardless of ideology. Carlist writer Roman Oyarzun even called for a union with the Falange, fundamentally different though the two groups were, the Carlists being Catholics first and advocating a decentralized government, while the Falangists were statists, most of whom saw the Church as having little or nothing rightly to say in matters of public policy.

Profound as were the long-term consequences of the exile of Fal Conde, in the short run it made no difference; the requetés went on fighting as well as ever. In Andalusia, led by the famous "Redondo column" commanded by General Luis Redondo (now known as the *tercio* of Our Lady of the Kings), the requetés defeated the 14th Communist International Brigade, first in an encounter near the village of Montoro on the day before Christmas, then more decisively in a two-day battle at Lopera near Córdoba on December 28 and 29. In the Battle of Lopera the English Communist poet John Cornford, great-grandson of Charles Darwin, was killed in action. At a Mass honoring the dead in this battle, Jesuit Father Copado said:

> The day of triumph is near. It pains us to see towns depopulated, houses in ruins, families in agony from village to village, brought low by tyranny and its threat. But it is unquestionable that there is no redemption without suffering. . . . Jesus means salvation, joy, bright horizons. Thus you, the army of the red berets, may be saviors of Spain, achieving with your blood the sublime title that will be the highest undertaking of your life. Spain has come to ruin by turning her back on Jesus Christ; you have come to resurrect the tradition of Spain, that the enemies of religion have covered with horrible scars. Give thanks to God for your sufferings, because through them you are working toward the day of triumph, when Spain will bless you and kiss you on the forehead with recovered appreciation, restored to herself, in new days of health and fame, strolling as queen and lady in the flowering fields of the Tradition.[28]

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[28]Luis Redondo and Juan de Zavala, *El Requeté: La Tradición no muere*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona, 1957), p. 480.

In this spirit the Nationalists faced the now inevitable long continuation of the civil war, as the epochal year of 1936 drew to its end. Knowing that he could not now take Madrid by frontal assault, Franco was trying to outflank it. On December 14 General Varela with 18,000 men began a new offensive north of the capital city, taking and holding the town of Boadilla del Monte. But the army of the Republic, notably its Communist components, buoyed by its successful defense of Madrid, moved quickly to stop this first flanking thrust. For four days battle raged near the town of Brunete, and ended December 19 in a draw. Franco continued probing for weak points, though moving farther away from Madrid in the process. On Christmas day—war took no holidays—General Varela, the Carlists' friend who had relieved Toledo and held tactical command of the attack on Madrid, was wounded and had to give up his field command for several months, though he was to return by the summer of 1937 to lead the Nationalist forces in another and greater battle at Brunete.

On December 15 the Spanish Communist Party issued a manifesto "which, more emphatically than any previous party document, preached the overriding needs of military defense and rejected anything which might prejudice military efficiency or antagonize potential allies in the war against the Nationalists."[29] It called for "iron discipline" in the army, tight control over the militia and trade unions, and the use of whatever system of land ownership and control would bring about the highest level of agricultural production. Six days later the Spanish Republic as it then existed received full written approval and a pledge of support from Joseph Stalin himself. In a letter to Prime Minister Largo Caballero on December 21, Stalin said:

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[29]E. H. Carr, *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Tamara Deutscher (New York, 1984), p. 33.

> We share your faith in the victory of the Spanish people. We consider and shall always consider it our duty to come, within our possibilities, to the aid of the Spanish government which is leading the struggle of all toilers, of the whole Spanish democracy, against the fascist-military clique, the agency of international fascist forces. . . .
>
> Our experience, especially that of our civil war, may have a certain importance for Spain if one bears in mind the specificity of the conditions of the Spanish revolutionary struggle. That is why we have agreed . . . to put at your disposal a number of military instructors. Their task will be to advise and help in military matters those Spanish military leaders to whom they are assigned.[30]

Stalin went on to recommend more agitation among the peasantry, avoiding confiscation of the property of the lower middle class so as not to drive it into the arms of the "fascists," continued cooperation with Azaña and his like to avoid creating the appearance of a purely Communist republic, and respect for property rights of foreigners so as not to encourage them to support the Nationalists. He even suggested that it might be well to maintain at least an appearance of parliamentary government in Republican Spain.

Replying three weeks later, Largo Caballero expressed fawning gratitude for Stalin's help, agreed with him about protecting the property rights of the lower middle class and foreigners, and said his government was trying to help and protect the peasants. "Unfortunately," he had to admit, "certain excesses in the countryside could not be avoided, but we earnestly hope that they will not be repeated." But on one point he actually dared to express reservations about a suggestion from Great Stalin; "whatever may be the future of the parliamentary form," he said, "it does not possess among us, or even among the republicans, enthusiastic defenders."[31]

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[31] Largo Caballero to Stalin, January 12, 1937, *ibid.*, p. 88.

In other words, Francisco Largo Caballero now intended to be dictator of Spain—a position in which Stalin was to decide, before the next year was over, not to maintain him.

But of the now unbreakable bond between the Soviet Union and the Communist revolution on the one hand, and the Spanish Republic on the other, Stalin's letter left no doubt.

Massacres and martyrdoms continued in Republican Spain through December. On the 6th, in Guadalajara northeast of Madrid, 277 prisoners were slaughtered, including 32 priests, allegedly in retaliation for a Nationalist bombing raid on the town. On the 27th, in Santander in the north, 160 prisoners including 14 priests were similarly slain after a Nationalist bombing raid. And on December 29, near Santander, Father Miguel de Grajal, a Capuchin Franciscan, who had continued exercising his priesthood under daily threat of death since the outbreak of the civil war, was captured with a companion named Bonifacio by a busload of militiamen, taken to kilometer post 7 on the highway from Gama to Santoña, and shot there. One of the shots passed through his arm before entering his chest, indicating that he had died blessing his killers.[32]

Churches throughout Republican Spain, except in its Basque regions, remained closed. American correspondent Edward Knoblaugh reported with amazement how there were no Masses at Christmas in the entire city of Valencia, where the government of the Republic was now located.[33]

On December 11 Pope Pius XI received the primate of Spain, Cardinal Gomá, in Rome, with great approval for all that he had done. Cardinal Gomá presented the Pope with a lengthy written appeal for his formal recognition of the Nationalist government of Spain. Pius XI did not immediately do this; he did not want to take sides so openly as long as there were still a substantial number of good practicing Catholics on the Republican

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[32]Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España*, pp. 133-135, 315-318, 354-355.

[33]Knoblaugh, *Correspondent in Spain*, pp. 168-169.

side and they were allowed to worship freely, as was still the case in the Basque provinces. But on December 19 Cardinal Gomá returned to Spain with a specific papal appointment as "confidential and semi-official representative" to Franco's Nationalist government.[34]

Ten days later Franco, as Generalissimo and head of the Spanish state, signed an agreement with Cardinal Gomá pledging full freedom for the Catholic Church in all its activities and close cooperation in areas where Church and state overlapped. He also promised to bring Spanish laws into conformity with Church doctrine.[35]

Thus did Francisco Franco confirm his commitment to the victory of the last crusade and its fruits, at the end of the year of death and glory, suffering and martyrdom, triumph and tragedy: 1936 in Spain.

[34]Payne, *Franco Regime*, p. 201.
[35]*Ibid.*

Road to Victory
(1937-1939)

The inability of the Spanish Nationalist army, even spearheaded by its finest fighting men, to take Madrid in November 1936 was the main cause for the prolongation of the Spanish Civil War for two and a half more years. Both sides remained committed to their cause to the very end, though many historians argue that Franco could have ended the war a year earlier by promising amnesty to all or most of the leaders and principal supporters of the Republic. But he insisted undeviatingly on unconditional surrender. While this is not a truly moral position, it was taken by the United States in World War II for almost exactly the same reasons that Franco and the Nationalists took it in the Spanish Civil War—the conviction that the crimes of their opponents in the war were so great that no terms or amnesty could be justified.

During the winter months of 1937, Nationalist offensives in the Jarama River valley and around Guadalajara, attempting to outflank Madrid, were unsuccessful, as were counterattacks by the Republicans. In April Franco ordered the unification of the very dissimilar Falange and Carlists, brushing aside strong protests by leaders of both groups. In that same month, in a struggle which has remarkable similarities to the siege of the Alcázar of Toledo on a smaller scale, about 250 Civil Guards from the Andalusian city of Jaén, their families, some Falangists, and about a thousand civilians from Andújar were holding out at a mountaintop shrine of Our Lady of La Cabeza. The defense was led by Santiago Cortés, a captain in the Civil Guard; his wife and children, like those of Moscardó at Toledo, were under the control of the revolutionaries in Jaén. Nationalist planes air-dropped

supplies into the small areas held by the defenders attached to turkeys, which acted as living parachutes descending more vertically than the man-made variety. By May 1 20,000 attackers, outnumbering the garrison fourteen to one, overwhelmed the defenders. The shrine went up in flames; Cortés, true to his valiant namesake who liberated Mexico from the acolytes of Satan, fought to the end, received a mortal wound, and died without revealing where he had buried the image of Our Lady of La Cabeza to preserve it from desecration.

On this May Day, tension between the Republican government, now increasingly and obviously under Communist control, and the anarchists in Barcelona who were intolerant of any control, reached such a pitch that the usual parades, speeches, and other celebrations of the workers' holiday were banned by the Catalan authorities. Two days later, anarchists at the telephone exchange opened fire on Communist forces advancing on the building. Fierce fighting went on for five days; some 400 were killed and more than a thousand wounded. The Communists were eager not only to put the anarchists firmly under their authority but also to wipe out a rival organization called POUM, headed by Trotsky's former private secretary, Andrés Nin, which had thousands of members in Catalonia. When Largo Caballero balked at liquidating Nin and the POUM, the Communists forced his removal as Prime Minister of the Spanish Republic. He was replaced by Juan Negrin, an enigmatic figure who, though never a Communist, was invariably willing and eager to do their bidding. (As Finance Minister, he was the man who had earlier shipped the entire national gold reserve of Spain to Soviet Russia, without hesitation or protest, to pay for Russian arms.)[1] Manuel Azaña, still titular president of the Spanish Republic, who was supposed to select or at least approve prime ministers, could only wring his hands in despair as (quoting his journal) he watched "revolutionary hysteria passing from words to deeds, in

[1]See chapter on September, above.

order to murder and steal; ineptitude of the rulers, immorality, cowardice, calumnies, shooting by one trade unionist of another, presumption by foreigners, insolence of separatists, disloyalty, pretence, empty talk by those who had failed, exploitation of the war to make money, negative approach to those desiring to organize an army, paralysis of the war operations . . ."[2]

One hardly needs cite Nationalist descriptions of the condition of Republican Spain in view of these devastating comments by its own president, who as prime minister of the Popular Front government bore much of the responsibility for the disintegration of order which made the war inevitable.

On June 1 General Mola died in a plane crash near Burgos. He was the only possible remaining rival to Franco among the army officers, though his failure to make any strong protest against Franco's designation as Generalissimo and head of state in the conferences of September 1936 make it most unlikely that he would have tried to supplant him later. He had become a great friend and advocate of the Carlists (whom he had so intransigently rebuffed in the critical negotiations with Fal Conde just before the rising) as a result of witnessing their splendid courage and faith in the armies under his command. Now in the process of being neutralized as a political force by Franco, they could very likely have benefitted from Mola's continued presence among the leaders of Nationalist Spain.

Despite Franco's mishandling of the lyrically Catholic Carlists, during the first half of 1937 he manifested his own Catholic commitment repeatedly. On the personal level, he attended daily Mass and often a daily rosary.[3] As head of state, he

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[2]Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1986), pp. 660-661.

[3]The attempt of Franco's latest biographer, Paul Preston (*Franco* [New York, 1993], p. 188), to impugn the sincerity of his Catholic convictions and practice at this point in his life is—like much in his vehemently hostile thousand-page biography—contemptible. How does he know what the Mass and Rosary meant to this man who said in his last

guaranteed the full freedom of the Church in Nationalist Spain—including the freedom of former primate Cardinal Segura, when he returned, to criticize the Falange for its fascist characteristics—and prescribed daily prayer in the schools, to which crucifixes were returned. In the words of Hugh Thomas, "the Catholic church permeated every aspect of Spanish nationalist culture."[4] On July 1, all but two of the Spanish bishops (the Archbishop of Tarragona, in exile in Switzerland, and the Bishop of Vitoria, who had been with the Republican Basques) signed a letter to all the rest of the world's bishops upholding the justice of the Nationalist rising and civil war to prevent the destruction of the Catholic Faith in Spain. And on August 28 Pope Pius XI formally recognized the Nationalist government and sent an apostolic delegate to Burgos. By then the Nationalists had taken the last Republican Basque province, Vizcaya, with comparatively little resistance, so that no active Catholic population remained with the Republic.

During the summer of 1937 another and more costly prolonged battle was fought in the searing plains around Madrid, near the town of Brunete. When it was over there was no significant change in the original battle lines, but the Republicans had lost more men than the Nationalists. Trying to draw Nationalist pressure away from the two remaining separated areas in north Spain still holding out for the Republic—the region around Castilian port of Santander and the Asturias—an army commanded almost entirely by Communists[5] taking orders from Russian General Grigorovich and a Russian air force general, attacked Nationalist posts in Aragon. At Codo 300 Carlists held out for days, without air cover, against 7-1 odds; when at last

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will and testament that he had always wished "to live and die as a Catholic"?

[4]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 756.

[5]Including three of the most famous Communist commanders in Spain: Enrique Lister; the Polish officer Karol Swierczewski who called himself "General Walter;" and the giant peasant Valentín González who called himself "El Campesino."

they were overwhelmed, the temporary victors found written on a wall a sentiment echoing the original crusades: "When you kill a Red, you will have a year less in purgatory."[6] The town of Belchite was defended with equal tenacity, and after taking it the Communist offensive in Aragon ground to a halt in September 1937.

Meanwhile, undistracted by the fighting in Aragon, the Nationalists had pressed on to take Santander (where the pro-Republican historian Thomas admits that the majority favored them)[7] on August 28. The year's Nationalist victories were crowned by securing the whole province of Asturias in October, including the ruins of the Simancas barracks at the Asturian port of Gijón.

A few days later Prime Minister Negrín officially moved the seat of government of the Republic from Valencia to Barcelona, apparently in order to assert his personal authority more directly over the fractious Catalans and avoid any repetition of the war in the streets with the anarchists in May. Catalonia, the most economically developed region of Spain, had suffered—not surprisingly—a drastic drop in production of all kinds from the moment the anarchists and Communists had taken it over in July; and it was not improving, but continuing to drop. Such was the naiveté of Negrín (he had been a professor of physiology before the war) and the incessant drumbeat of socialist and Communist propaganda both within and outside Spain that few in the Republic could really believe the truth, since proven again and again all over the world, that socialism—to say nothing of anarchism—simply does not work economically. Negrín probably thought that his presence might help in boosting production. Also, Barcelona was a much larger city than Valencia and closer to France, from which Negrín still hoped to get help in addition

[6]Thomas, *Spanish Civil War* (2nd ed.), p. 726.
[7]*Ibid.*, p. 719.

to the aid he was receiving from the Soviet Union. Nevertheless it is surprising that more consideration was not given to a return to Madrid, which had after all been the capital of Spain for centuries, where the Republic had won its most remarkable military victory, which would have to be their base if they were ever to win the war, and which in fact they held to the end of it.

Whatever its motives, Negrín's move to Barcelona was a huge mistake. Many Catalans, who passionately desired self-government (little though they seemed to be able in practice to govern themselves), resented the presence of the national government in their own capital and became increasingly apathetic in their once almost universal support of the revolutionary war.

At the end of December 1937 the Republicans attacked a Nationalist salient, the easternmost territory they held in Spain: the bleak province of Teruel, which regularly records the coldest winter temperatures in the country. Teruel was chosen as an objective partly because of its threatening position, but more because its isolation and the harshness of its climate made the attack unexpected. Only about two thousand Nationalist troops, aided by an approximately equal number of militia, garrisoned the ancient walled provincial capital of gray weathered stone as Communist Enrique Líster led his 11th Division to attack it through thickly falling snow. Franco ordered the garrison commander, Colonel Rey d'Harcourt, to hold out to the last, and sent a large force under Generals Varela and Aranda (the hero of Oviedo) to relieve them. Just as they were approaching the beleaguered town the temperature fell to 18 degrees below zero, most of the Nationalist engines froze, and the entire countryside was buried under four feet of snow. Water ran out; the garrison melted snow to drink. On January 8, 1938 Colonel d'Harcourt finally surrendered when his decimated soldiers could no longer fight under these arctic conditions. Bishop Anselmo Polanco of Teruel was also taken prisoner at this time. Líster's men put the colonel and the bishop into close confinement, where they were

held until the fall of Barcelona to the Nationalists the next year. Then they were both killed before they could be rescued, riddled by machine-gun bullets after which their bodies were doused with gasoline and set afire. Bishop Polanco of Teruel was the last of the thirteen Spanish bishops to die at the hands of the enemies of Christ during the Spanish Civil War, a final sign and proof of the implacable hatred of the Catholic Church by the revolutionaries in that war.[8]

When the weather around Teruel finally cleared in late January 1938, the Nationalist forces were able to go over to the offensive. The Communist International Brigades were brought up, but many of their most committed fighters had become casualties, and increasingly more of the gaps in their ranks were filled by Spaniards. Consequently the Brigades fought less effectively than in the past, and were driven back and outmaneuvered by Varela's and Aranda's Nationalists. On February 7 the Nationalists won a battle north of Teruel by a tremendous cavalry charge, the last significant military action in the history of warfare in the West to be decided by men on horseback. General Yagüe and his Moroccans had now come up, and in a three-day struggle from February 17 to 20 the Communists were driven out of Teruel and a great victory won over the Republican army. Lister and "El Campesino," the famous gigantic Communist peasant warrior, each accused the other of abandoning him, and "El Campesino" also made the same accusation against Russian General Grigorovich. Revolutionary solidarity was fading fast, even among the Communists.

Vigorously following up their advantage, the Nationalist armies pressed on from Teruel toward the Mediterranean, only about 75 miles away. They reached it on Good Friday, April 15, cutting the Republic in two. The morale of the International Brigades broke; a significant number of their surviving men were shot by their own fanatical officers in desperate and futile at-

[8]Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 421-427.

tempts to keep them fighting. They were never again a significant factor in the war. By November all survivors of the Communist foreign volunteers had left Spain.

Nevertheless the Communist commanders in Spain were still determined to fight on, and the Soviet Union was still providing them with the means to do so, including much improved fighter aircraft. On July 25, 1938 they launched a last offensive along the Ebro River seventy miles northwest of its mouth at the Mediterranean, hoping to outflank and outmaneuver the Nationalists on the coast and restore communication with the remaining Republican areas in the south around Valencia and Madrid. In this offensive every corps and divisional commander, and all but two brigade commanders were Communists. Lister led the initial attack, advancing 25 miles in the first day. But the Nationalist commander in that sector was the redoubtable Yagüe, and by August 1 he had halted the Communists at a hill fronting the town of Gandesa. The Nationalists brought up a large quantity of artillery, which hammered away at the enemy day after day during the fierce heat of August. By the 14th Yagüe began making periodic counterattacks, and on September 3 he pressed forward with two corps and regained almost all the territory that had been lost. After a steady build-up, the Nationalists were able to launch a full-scale offensive of their own on October 30, and by November 16 had secured a decisive victory in what was to prove the last major field action of the war. When on December 23 300,000 Nationalist troops moved north from the Ebro into Catalonia, there was hardly any resistance. Just over a month later, on January 25, 1939, Barcelona was taken, almost bloodlessly.

An enormous exodus followed, nearly 400,000 people flooding across the border into France. Many had good reason to fear Franco's justice, in view of the enormous number of savage crimes committed particularly in Catalonia in the first year of the war, though many others innocent of these atrocities undoubtedly fled along with the criminals because they had been

terrified by the propaganda of the revolutionaries. (At least a quarter of the refugees quietly returned to Spain before the year was over.) The leaders of the Republican government all departed, though Negrín and a few others returned to Valencia in a forlorn and foredoomed effort to carry on the war in the southeastern provinces still held by the Republic. At long last Azaña submitted his resignation as president. Nearly everyone in Spain and out concluded that the fall of Barcelona effectively doomed the Republic. Virtually all of the senior officers in Madrid quickly came to that conclusion. When Negrín still stubbornly refused to listen to them, Colonel Segismundo Casado assembled a group of officers in Madrid who proclaimed themselves a National Defense Council, no longer accepting Negrín's authority. General Miaja supported Casado, and Negrín had to flee to Africa. Communist troops in Madrid then rose against Casado, led by Colonel Luis Barceló, who had commanded the revolutionary militia against the Alcázar of Toledo in July 1936. Barceló shot three of Casado's staff officers, but a few days later was captured and shot himself. So, in a last hail of fratricidal bullets, the revolution in Spain came to a bloody finish. Madrid surrendered to Franco, and Nationalist troops occupied the city on March 28, 1939. Three days later all remaining cities in the Republican zone had also surrendered and Franco announced the end of the war.

The victors in the last crusade celebrated with a glorious parade in Madrid in which thousands of Carlist veterans with their red berets received the most tumultuous applause. On May 20, 1939 Franco attended a *Te Deum* service in the Church of Santa Barbara in Madrid, offering this prayer:

> Lord, benevolently accept the effort of this people, which was always Thine, which, with me and in Thy name, has vanquished with heroism the enemy of truth in this century.[9]

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[9]Brian Crozier, *Franco, a Biographical History* (Boston, 1967), p. 294.

Then he laid his sword before the high altar, with the solemn promise to God and man never to draw it again save in defense of his country against invasion. He kept his promise all through the 36 years of life and governance that remained to him. Ever since that day Spain has known peace, and the full freedom of her people to practice their Catholic faith.

Franco's description of the enemy which the last crusade had vanquished was extraordinarily profound, especially for a man who had never been nor considered himself to be an intellectual, and is scorned and hated by most intellectuals to this day. The revolutionaries and their necessary philosophical allies, the relativists, are indeed and have always been the enemies of truth in the twentieth century. All their pretensions, their ambition, their methods and goals, rest upon and derive from the denial of objective truth and objective moral law. Nowhere in all their shattering history has that been so clearly demonstrated as by the horrors of the religious persecution in Spain which made the Spanish Civil War a crusade.

The total number of Catholic priests and religious martyred in the territory of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War was 6,832, most of whom were killed without even "the simulacrum of condemnation by revolutionary tribunals."[10] This total included 4,184 diocesan clergy, 2,365 male regular clergy and religious, and 283 nuns, "the greatest clerical bloodletting in the entire history of the Christian Church," exceeding by a substantial margin the clerical victims of the French Revolution and of the Communist Revolution in Russia. This amounted to 12 per cent of the total number of clergy and religious in Spain, and about a quarter of those caught in the Republican zone, which at the beginning of the war comprised almost half the country. In the diocese of Barbastro 85 per cent of the priests (123 of 140) were killed, in Madrid 30 percent (334), in Valencia 27 percent

[10]Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison WI, 1987), p. 198.

(327), and in Barcelona 22 percent (279). Most of these killings occurred during the first six months of the war—the period chronicled in this book. Of the total of 976 priests and religious killed throughout the war in the diocese of Barcelona, all but 59 were killed in 1936.[11]

> In addition to these deaths, an incalculable number of lay persons were killed because of their religious associations, either as well-known churchgoers, members of fraternal and charitable religious organizations, or as the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends of clerics. Some were killed because they professed their faith by wearing some outward symbol of belief, perhaps a religious medal or scapular. Some were killed for acts of charity, for granting refuge to clerics attempting to escape the fury.[12]

In their joint letter "to the whole world" in 1937, the Spanish bishops estimated that 20,000 churches and chapels out of a total of 42,000 in Spain had been destroyed. In Barcelona more than 800 churches and chapels were totally destroyed; only ten in the entire archdiocese emerged from the holocaust unharmed. In Madrid the overwhelming majority of churches were also damaged or destroyed. In Valencia 800 churches were destroyed and more than 1,500 damaged; in Oviedo the corresponding figures were 354 and 287. In the dioceses of Ciudad Real and Segorbe every church without exception was destroyed or damaged, and almost all in the dioceses of Cartagena, Cuenca, Gerona, Santander, and Toledo.[13]

These appalling facts and statistics, not now questioned by any serious historian of the Spanish Civil War, are the enduring and irrefutable proof that the Spanish crusade of 1936 was justi

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[11]José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), pp. 8-10.

[12]*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[13]Antonio Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa en España, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 629-633.

fied and that the dominant elements in the Spanish Republic were as profound, thoroughgoing, and vicious enemies as the Christian Faith has ever met anywhere in all its history.

It remains to discuss the issue of the deaths for which Franco and his government were responsible. In considering this vexed question, it is first necessary to set aside all deaths which were directly or indirectly the result of the war, whose justification or lack of it comes under the heading of whether this was a just war[14] and not of Franco's personal policy. It is also necessary, in fairness, to set aside those executions which were ordered by others without Franco's knowledge or consent, especially in the first two months after the rising before Franco was named Generalissimo and head of state. During the war Franco repeatedly pledged to bring to justice all persons whom he could find, whom there was good reason to believe guilty of committing, aiding or abetting the criminal horrors of 1936. He never granted any amnesty to such people, and continued relentlessly to pursue them until 1959.

Whatever one may conclude about the wisdom or desirability of such a pursuit, it is not necessarily contrary to the Christian teaching of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a personal response to the soul of an offender; justice is a state responsibility to find, convict, and punish the guilty. The decision on which persons to prosecute and what penalty to exact if they are found guilty is a decision of public policy. The conviction and especially the execution of the innocent, or the designation of innocent and justified behavior as criminal, is always wrong. Procedures to determine guilt or innocence may be faulty and errors may be made

[14]Arguments have been presented immediately above and throughout this book to show that the war was just. This was the position taken by all but two of the Spanish bishops in their "letter to the whole world" in 1937 and implicitly by the Vatican through its recognition of the Nationalist government of Spain before they had won final victory, and the beatification of nearly 200 Spanish priests and religious martyred during the revolutionary persecution.

in carrying those procedures out. But only the condemnation of a person wholly without regard to his actual guilt or innocence is inherently wrong.

An immense number of the most terrible crimes imaginable—acts which would have been crimes in any organized society of any culture which history has ever known—had been committed in the Spanish Republic during the Civil War, mostly in the last six months of 1936. Not only were those who had actually committed these crimes guilty of them, but also all who were accessories before or after the fact—those who had called for and facilitated the commission of these crimes and aided the criminals knowing what they had done, were doing, or planned to do. Those who had aided them because of fear could present that as an extenuating circumstance when their punishment was being deliberated, but motives do not affect the objective fact of responsibility for crime. Nor was there any moral imperative to end the pursuit of these criminals at any particular point in time. No country has a statute of limitations on murder.

In recent years we have seen a striking demonstration of this often overlooked or ignored truth in the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. Nearly every Western country has concluded that those actively involved in carrying out the horrendous crimes of the Nazis, particularly their attempted extermination of all Jews, deserve neither amnesty nor an end to pursuit. Nazi war criminals are still being arrested, tried, and imprisoned fifty years after the commission of their crimes, even when aged and now obviously harmless. Justice is held to demand it. Justice does demand it.[15]

But if justice demands this lifelong pursuit, trial, and even (as for Adolf Eichmann) execution of Nazi war criminals, then it makes the same demand for the Spanish criminals who attempted to exterminate the priests and religious of Spain, and many other

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[15]It is very much worthy of note here that hundreds of thousands of Jews whose forebears had lived in Spain, even if centuries before, were rescued by Franco's government during World War II.

Catholics as well, whom no sane man could have believed guilty of any crime, any more than the Jewish children who died in the Nazi death camps.

Franco was not utterly merciless. He commuted many death sentences to periods of imprisonment of varying length. It can be reasonably argued that he should have commuted more of them, and ended the process of search, investigation and trial sooner, except for a few of the best known and worst offenders. But no moral law required him to do so, for justice is the supreme duty of the state.

This is the context in which we should view the total numbers of executions and murders by the two sides in the Spanish Civil War, which have been assembled with as much accuracy as we are ever likely to get, in the magisterial study of Ramón Salas Larrazábal published in 1977. In the Republic from 1936 to 1939 the total was 72,344; in Nationalist Spain from 1936 to 1950, it was 57,662. Of the Nationalist total, 16,763 were executions during the first two years after the war, with 5,878 more during the next ten years.[16] All of these were done in a country at peace under judicial process; many, perhaps a majority of the executions and homicides during the war were without a genuine trial.

That there were at least 22,641 Spaniards who deserved the worst judicial penalty for the crimes of 1936 in the Republican zone can hardly be denied by any honest and fair commentator. Many would now declare that their penalty should not have been death; but every Western nation in the period 1936-1950 used the death penalty with some frequency. It is important to note that in France immediately after World War II, over 10,000 people were executed for treason—collaboration with the German occupation

[16]Ramón Salas Larrazábal, *Pérdidas de la guerra* (Barcelona, 1977), Tables 102 (p. 362), 104 (p. 371), 106 (pp. 387-388), and p. 390. Less than a hundred more were executed for crimes committed during the Civil War during the next nine years, from 1950 to 1959.

forces during the war.[17] Even in notoriously liberal Norway a considerable number were tried and some (including Vidkun Quisling) executed for treason committed during the German occupation of their country. Though trials during the war in Nationalist Spain were on many occasions conducted without due respect for the rights of the accused, that was not the case after the war. Certainly there were some miscarriages of justice. But there was guilt to be found, and justice to be done, and Franco was pledged to bring these criminals to justice, as much as any Nazi-hunter today is pledged to bring the butchers and torturers of Hitler's concentration camps to justice. It ill behooves those who have never seen nor really tried to imagine the kind of horrors that were routine in Auschwitz and Dachau and Treblinka from 1942 to 1945—or in Barcelona, Madrid, Barbastro, and Toledo in 1936—to call for them to be left unpunished.

A convincing case against Franco's executions requires not simply their total numbers, but proof of widespread, deliberate violations of justice, convicting the innocent or defining innocent behavior as criminal, for which he was personally responsible. There is no such proof.

But ultimately the last crusade was far greater than its leader. Franco, like all the other crusaders, was borne by its tide. A militant minority of the people of Spain had committed themselves to destroy its age-old Catholic faith, indeed every foundation stone upon which their state and society was built, in total revolution. Through clever and deceitful propaganda the Spanish revolutionaries had gained the support of most of the Western world. The Spaniards who in July 1936 took their stand against the forward marching revolution had all the odds against them. They could expect help only from two men, Hitler and Mussolini, who were potentially as great a threat as the Spanish and

[17]Cf. Herbert R. Lottman, *The Purge; the Purification of French Collaborators after World War II* (New York, 1986).

Soviet revolutionaries. Against a hostile or heedless world, against the course of history, against all the furies loosed by the apostates of the twentieth century, they raised up the cross of Christ and proclaimed their crusade—and won it. For those who wait upon the Lord renew their strength, and rise up as on wings of eagles.

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